

GREENE IS GOLDE

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CHRIST'S CROSS MEGACHURCH - DAY

A sea of Bush-Cheney-stickered, Jesus fish-emblazoned pickups and SUVs encircle this sports arena-turned-megachurch.

NOAH (V.O.)

It's time, y'all, to thank the host
with the most, the man with the plan,
our big guy in the sky ...

INT. CHRIST'S CROSS MEGACHURCH - DAY

A 17,000-strong CONGREGATION, arms raised in praise, devour the Texan twang of their infectiously happy, boyish pastor, NOAH NICHOLS (40), who stands beside a cross-shaped podium.

Ten television cameras and CAMERAMEN film the Sunday service.

NOAH

... We thank you, dear Lord, for the
beauty of bounty and the bounty of
beauty you have bestowed upon us once
again ...

Hand-in-hand with Noah: his big-haired, bottle-blonde, former beauty queen wife, HALEY NICHOLS (35), towheaded son NOLAN (6), and ruggedly handsome WALT GREENE (50), whose devil-may-care presence stands apart from the hallowed setting.

NOAH (CONT'D)

... May you continue to bless us with
the radiance of your love and the
clarity of your message ...

Behind Noah stands an imposing, 60-foot-tall white cross. A Christmas wreath, 15 feet wide, hangs at its heart.

A hundreds-strong CHOIR flanks the giant cross. Farther back, jumbotrons magnify Noah's blindingly white, toothy grin.

NOAH (CONT'D)

... With love in my heart and peace
in my mind, I turn my eyes to God
Almighty, and He says unto me ...

EVERYONE

... Praise it and amaze it!

NOAH

In the name of our Lord, Jesus ...

Haley shoots a quick look to Walt, who winks coolly back.

NOAH (CONT'D)

... Amen.

On "Amen":

A GUNSHOT

pops and nails the podium cross.

The white wood splinters in front of Noah, who looks to Haley, unsure as to what is happening.

A SECOND GUNSHOT

rings out and pierces the stage, inches from Walt's feet. Noah's eyes widen at the sight.

A THIRD GUNSHOT

erupts and sends Walt to his knees. His dress shirt bleeds red at his abdomen.

NOAH, HALEY, AND NOLAN

are rushed off-stage by headset-wearing CHURCH OFFICIALS as a stampede breaks out across the arena.

HALEY

Walt!

WALT

clutches his bloody side with one hand and reaches out with the other.

WALT

Noah --

EXT. UPPER-CLASS SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

A yolk-yellow Hummer limousine winds through an elite area of moneyed hedges and oversized gates.

SUPER: ONE MONTH EARLIER

The road yields to a modernized medieval city wall. Engraved in its archway: GREENE IS GOLDE.

Security cameras zoom in. The steel gate opens.

EXT. GREENE MANOR - NIGHT

A manicured lawn, divided by a moon-reflecting infinity pool, stretches to the horizon, where a Gothic, old-world mansion looms over an elaborate topiary garden. All is floodlit.

HUMMER LIMOUSINE

parks before the stone mansion on a pebbled drive.

Its emotionless driver, WHITE PERSONAL SECURITY DETAIL (PSD), exits and opens the rear passenger door.

Two TEENAGE GIRLS (JADED TEEN, NYMPHET TEEN), model-thin in skin-tight cocktail dresses, step out.

JADED TEEN (V.O.)
Hit me, bitch.

INT. GREENE MANOR - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Walt, with an elitist prick's entitlement, lies back on his gold-sheeted bed as topless Jaded Teen straddles him and panties-free Nymphet Teen pins his arms down with her legs.

WALT
What, no sweet-talk first?

NYMPHET TEEN
(to Jaded Teen)
Do it.

Jaded Teen punches Walt in the mouth.

WALT
What the hell's the matter with you?

JADED TEEN
Hit me back, asshole.

WALT
(licks his busted lip)
You broke skin.

NYMPHET TEEN
Man up. Hit her back.

WALT
You two are done. Get out.

JADED TEEN
Not till you hit me.

Walt yanks free of Nymphet Teen and tosses her off of the bed. Jaded Teen swings again. Walt catches her mid-punch.

WALT
Not so fast.

Walt backhands Jaded Teen. She tumbles onto the floor.

WALT (CONT'D)
That rough enough for you?

JADED TEEN
Not even close.

NYMPHET TEEN
Bet your brother coulda done better.

WALT
What'd you say?

JADED TEEN
Too close to home, bitch?

NYMPHET TEEN
Quit being a pussy. Hit us already.

WALT
(clenches his fist)
With fucking pleasure.

EXT. GREENE MANOR - DAY

A jet-black Lincoln Town Car speeds through the immaculately groomed landscape, toward the mansion, until

BLACK PERSONAL SECURITY DETAIL (PSD), linebacker-built in a Secret Service-like suit, appears in its path.

TOWN CAR

slams to a stop. Before the CHAUFFEUR can put the car into park, out exits

Finely suited MAY ELLEN PRICE (45), whose subdued femininity, cut-the-shit seriousness, and enraged demeanor can't hide her girl-next-door attractiveness.

MAY ELLEN
Where the hell's he hiding?

BLACK PSD
Arms up, ma'am. Standard procedure.

MAY ELLEN
Standard for who?

After a long stare, May Ellen complies. Black PSD frisks her.

MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)
Is this his idea of a joke?

BLACK PSD
This way, ma'am. And yes.

VAST MEADOW

A pellet-ridden dummy (rubberized, legless torso) zigzags through the grass. Black PSD stops May Ellen with a lifted hand.

MAY ELLEN
Enough with the games already.

A shotgun blast peppers the faceless dummy, which continues to run its tracked course.

BLACK PSD
After you, ma'am.

WALT

and his commanding, camouflaged shoulders emerge from the tall grass. Shotgun in hand, unlit cigar in mouth.

WALT
I'd say that's a hit.

He sees May Ellen approach as White PSD, in a black suit and orange hunting vest, also appears from the grass.

WALT (CONT'D)
Uh-oh, here come the handcuffs.
(extends wrists)
Be gentle.

MAY ELLEN
That's exactly what you deserve.

May Ellen slams a folder into Walt's chest. Inside, he finds police-like photos of beat-up Jaded and Nymphet Teen.

MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)

What the fuck were you thinking?
Underage girls are bad enough, but
then you beat the shit out of them?

WALT

They begged me for it.

Walt moves toward high-end outdoor furniture, where a pitcher of iced tea and boxes of Tall-Cart shotgun shells sit.

MAY ELLEN

Board's beyond infuriated with you
already. And then you do this.

WALT

Fuck them, the leeches.

Walt pours glasses of iced tea and slides one to May Ellen.

MAY ELLEN

A vote's been set up for the next
meeting. To oust you, Mr. Chairman.

WALT

Intimidation doesn't suit you. I'm
more than safe, and you know it.

MAY ELLEN

Tall-Cart will never oust a Greene?
That's what I used to think, too.

Walt empties the shotgun barrels of the spent shells.

WALT

Granddad started the company, Father
grew it into world's biggest, and
Billy, well ...

MAY ELLEN

But the board doesn't see you as that
same kind of Greene anymore.

WALT

Tall-Cart is a family business. My
family. And I'm the only Greene left.

MAY ELLEN

The board would gladly cut the last
Greene loose rather than have your
reckless dick tank the company.

WALT

Seems you're wasting your time, then.

MAY ELLEN

But opinions are meant to be swayed.

Walt shoots an assessing look May Ellen's way as he reloads.

WALT

You've always wanted my head, so why should I believe your sudden concern?

MAY ELLEN

One, what happened between us was a long time ago. Two, if I wanted you out, why have all your indiscretions over the years disappeared without word ever getting to the press?

May Ellen wipes her nostril of imaginary cocaine.

WALT

You've made some career out of me and my vices. Parasite in a pantsuit.

MAY ELLEN

My title may be CEO, but get real, Walt, I'm a mop-girl, thanks to you.

WALT

Oh, be nice. It's not that bad.

MAY ELLEN

Three, the media hurricane caused by your "exit" would be impossible to handle, even for me. Heads would roll.

WALT

And you're first in line.

MAY ELLEN

After you, I am.

Walt snaps the shotgun breech shut.

WALT

Self-interest, then?

MAY ELLEN

Mutual self-interest. Show the board you mean business, and we put this behind us. Plus, you get to keep that fine house your granddad built. After all, it is tied to the chairmanship.

WALT

The dreaded grandfather clause: the seat belongs to the Chair.

MAY ELLEN

Saving your home is simpler than you may think. Two words: get religion.

WALT

Walt Greene, altar boy? Try again.

MAY ELLEN

Tall-Cart's slipping in the Christian market. You, our soon-to-be born-again Chairman, will change that, just as you've changed your heathen ways.

WALT

I better start packing, then.

MAY ELLEN

You don't have to actually change, only make it seem like you have.

WALT

Go on.

Walt lifts the shotgun to the table, too close to May Ellen for her comfort. She moves the barrel with a finger.

MAY ELLEN

It's all in the company you keep, and turning a basketball arena into a house of God costs big. Our favorite Christian couple needs a new partner.

WALT

Christ's Cross and the damn Nichols? You really are desperate.

MAY ELLEN

No name commands more loyalty among Christian consumers than theirs. Plus, they need money almost as badly as you need to save your job.

Walt, from the table, lines up his shot. In the crosshairs, the dummy continues its zigzag. May Ellen plugs her ears.

WALT

You could've looked further than my family's dirty laundry.

MAY ELLEN
Simplest answer's often the best.

WALT
We'll see about that.

Walt fires and shreds the dummy's shoulder.

EXT. CHRIST'S CROSS MEGACHURCH - DAY

Empty parking lots surround the quiet megachurch, which is draped with giant, Pastor Noah banners. In the distance, a Tall-Cart billboard is seen: PRICES SO LOW, CARTS SO HIGH.

ZEKE (V.O.)
I formally submit my resignation,
effective immediately ...

INT. CHRIST'S CROSS MEGACHURCH - ZEKE'S OFFICE - DAY

A beyond spacious corner office with gnarled wood furnishings and floor-to-ceiling windows.

ZEKE
... As you can see, I provided the
reason for my decision.

Weather-worn, time-creased ZEKE PERRY (65) sits in a cream-colored ten-gallon hat and Western-trimmed sport coat.

Across from him, Noah looks over a letter and reads.

NOAH
The financial destructiveness,
misdirection, and just plain
stupidity of a certain member of
church leadership.

ZEKE
Sounds even truer coming out of
your mouth than mine.

Noah rips the resignation in two, then slides it onto the desk, next to paperwork stacks and a hand-carved, Texas-shaped paperweight that reads: DON'T MESS WITH JESUS.

NOAH
You're not resigning. You never will.

ZEKE

Still, I remember when God Almighty was our ministry's driving force, not the almighty dollar.

Zeke stands from his chair and looks out of his wall of windows, over a nearby plaza and a parking lot expanse.

NOAH

Like Haley said, the bigger the platform, the better the ministry. A plan both of us signed off on.

ZEKE

Too many dollars, not enough sense, if you ask me. And since when does a Miss Texas tiara qualify someone to run the largest church in the state?

NOAH

Not fair. You know how hard those things are, how hard she worked.

ZEKE

Your daddy's rolling in his grave with how this church's turned into a beauty pageant. You'd be wearing fake eyelashes if it wasn't for me.

NOAH

Can't you two just talk already?

ZEKE

That was the plan.
(checks watch)
Seems we've both been stood up.

HALEY (O.S.)

Speak for yourself, Zeke.

A disinterested Haley appears in the doorway, dressed business ready in designer attire and Jackie O sunglasses.

HALEY (CONT'D)

I never stand my husband up.

Haley taps her foot as Zeke stares her down across his desk clutter. Noah sits uncomfortably between them.

HALEY (CONT'D)

So, did you ask me here to actually say something or are you just going to stare at me like a dog?

ZEKE

I'm waiting for the money you promised to find. The money we need to keep this place running.

NOAH

Now, why don't we --

HALEY

Like I said, I'm on it. In fact, I have a lead to follow up on.

ZEKE

You been saying that for months. And yet, still no money.

HALEY

Since when do I answer to you?

ZEKE

I run this place, case you forgot.

HALEY

Don't fool yourself, Zeke. It's my effort that got us here. Mine.

NOAH

Easy there. We all chipped in.

Zeke slaps the paperwork stacks cluttering his desktop.

ZEKE

Here ain't worth the bragging. We're an ass-hair away from losing it all.

HALEY

And it'll be my effort, not yours, that gets us out.

Haley places a casual hand on one of the many paper stacks.

ZEKE

You better pray so.

HALEY

I know so.

Haley pushes the stack over. It smacks against Zeke's lap.

EXECUTIVE HALLWAY

Noah catches up to Haley, who steps into an elevator.

NOAH

Come back in and make peace, or I'll never hear the end of it.

HALEY

He thinks small. You deserve better. I'm off to make it happen.

NOAH

Fine. I'll talk to him, give him some pulpit charm.

HALEY

(as the doors close)
Don't waste your breath.

INT. DOWNTOWN BANK HEADQUARTERS - EXECUTIVE OFFICE - DAY

Haley gathers an assortment of papers before HUSKY BANKER.

Out of the window, across the road, CUSTOMERS push oddly tall shopping carts in and out of the big box behemoth, Tall-Cart.

HALEY

I understand your hesitation. Seems the biggest balls in the room belong to the one born without a pair.

HUSKY BANKER

We've lent you over seven million dollars this year alone. There's a limit to our lending.

HALEY

Sounds like pussyfooting to me.
(as she heads out)
Call if you ever decide to get back into the banking business. Coward.

EXT. DOWNTOWN BANK HEADQUARTERS - PARKING LOT - DAY

Haley exits the bank and heads toward a white Land Rover LR3.

HALEY

Damn it, Haley, now you've done it.

BLACK PSD (O.S.)

Morning, ma'am.

Haley jumps, startled. She spots a yolk-yellow Hummer limo parked nearby, then Black PSD, who opens the rear passenger door and holds it for her.

BLACK PSD (CONT'D)
He would like to speak to you.

HALEY
Ever hear of picking up a phone?

INT. HUMMER LIMOUSINE - DAY

Haley climbs in to find Walt sitting across the limo with a smirk on his face. Black PSD eases the door shut behind her.

WALT
Meeting not go as hoped?

HALEY
It's been how many years, and that's what you say to me?

WALT
Better than what I had planned.

HALEY
And that was?

WALT
I'm kidnapping you.

Haley's thrown into her seat as the limo speeds off.

EXT. TALL-CART CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Unnaturally clean pavement surrounds a faceless mid-rise. At roadside, a green-and-gold-lettered, stone TALL-CART sign.

INT. TALL-CART CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CEO OFFICE - DAY

May Ellen slips off her reading glasses and stands from her modernly minimal, glossy black desk as Husky Banker enters.

MAY ELLEN
There's my favorite numbers man.

HUSKY BANKER
Hope it was worth it.

Husky Banker removes folded papers (Haley's rejected loan application) from his suit and hands it to May Ellen.

HUSKY BANKER (CONT'D)
She's a good client.

MAY ELLEN

Is she now?

HUSKY BANKER

Not compared to you, ma'am.

INT. HUMMER LIMOUSINE - DAY

Walt refills Haley's champagne flute with Dom Perignon, then spoons a taste of black caviar from a silver serving dish.

WALT

Say the magic words.

HALEY

Beluga me.

Walt teasingly extends the spoon half-way. Haley leans in and takes the caviar into her mouth. Her eyes close with the bite's sensual pleasure.

HALEY (CONT'D)

Mmm. A girl could get used to that.

WALT

You have a taste for the best, and that should always be indulged.

HALEY

Tell that to Noah. His idea of fine dining is spray cheese and catfish.

WALT

That's no way to live.

Walt extends the caviar dish. Haley spoons another bite.

HALEY

But this is.

EXT. GREENE MANOR - TOPIARY GARDEN - DAY

Walt and Haley stroll between oversized, geometric garden sculptures. Everything about their walk is familiar.

WALT

You need money, which I have. I need a face for our Christian market push, which you and Noah can provide.

HALEY

Noah isn't exactly as fond of the Greene family name as I am.

WALT

That have anything to do with you and my baby brother?

HALEY

Like it was yesterday. Finding out you're second-best hurts deep, no matter how long it's been.

WALT

Good thing I'm not Billy, then.

HALEY

Noah sees a lot of Billy in you. And so do I.

They turn a corner, and the mammoth mansion comes into view. Haley stops, transfixed by the sight.

WALT

Is the Greene family burden the same spectacle you remember?

HALEY

Are you kidding? I didn't realize how much I missed this place until now.

WALT

In that case, welcome home. This was almost yours, after all.

HALEY

Almost.

SOLARIUM

Walt and Haley sit at a cafe table, with small plates of finger-food before them. White PSD stands by, at a distance.

HALEY

We need to change how Noah views you. Only way I see is through the church.

WALT

Lucky for us, I've just rededicated my life to the Lord.

Walt motions to White PSD, who pulls a necklace crucifix out from under his shirt and holds it up for Haley to see.

WALT (CONT'D)

Not one to flaunt my beliefs.

HALEY

That should play well with Noah.

WALT

Enough for a partnership between us?

HALEY

Depends on what you have to offer.

STUDY

Walt stands before a wall-sized map of Tall-Cart locations worldwide. Before him sits Haley, one leg over the other.

WALT

Try 8,000-plus stores in 64 countries serving 100 million customers a week.

HALEY

Is that supposed to impress me?

WALT

Since I'm proposing a merchandise deal, it damn well better.

Walt pulls up a chair and sits beside Haley.

WALT (CONT'D)

Plus, we're always looking for one-of-a-kind store sites, and your church campus has got lots of land.

HALEY

You'll have to offer some sizeable money upfront to open Noah's eyes.

Haley goes through a quick calculation in her head.

HALEY (CONT'D)

Say, 10 million. Cash.

WALT

That's more than sizeable.

HALEY

It has to be. Any meeting I get you into will only happen once.

WALT

And 10 mil guarantees me a deal?

HALEY

A third of one. You'll need Zeke and Noah's signatures, too.

WALT

And how much will those cost?

Haley stands, then leans over and kisses Walt's cheek.

HALEY

Not as much as you think.

EXT. HOUSTON SKYSCRAPER - NIGHT

A sleekly modern, blue-glassed residential highrise stands across town from the downtown skyline.

INT. MAY ELLEN'S PENTHOUSE - EXERCISE ROOM - NIGHT

A spandexed and ponytailed May Ellen works up a sweat on an elliptical machine. A doorbell ring stops her, mid-workout.

MAY ELLEN (V.O.)

Aw, Christ ...

GRAND FOYER

May Ellen, now robed with face flushed, peeks through the front door peephole.

MAY ELLEN

... You have to be kidding me.

WALT (O.S.)

I can tell you're there.

May Ellen unlocks the door, cracks it, then in steps Walt.

MAY ELLEN

How'd you get past the front desk? I pay a fortune to keep out undesirables.

WALT

Good thing I'm not undesirable.

Walt notices the glisten on May Ellen's neck and the apparent lack of clothing beneath her robe.

WALT (CONT'D)

Did I interrupt something? Tell me it was something good.

MAY ELLEN

I can still call security, you know.

WALT

Easy there. I'll let you get back to whomever after I share one thing.

MAY ELLEN

This can't wait till morning?

WALT

Haley took the bait. They're hurting for money more than you thought.

(re: her appearance)

So, what are you hurting for?

May Ellen grabs a smart phone from her purse and types.

MAY ELLEN

That's great. What did you offer her?

WALT

Merchandise line and a store on church grounds. What's his name?

MAY ELLEN

That's more than I anticipated.

WALT

I have a long stride. I thought you would remember that, of all people.

May Ellen stops typing and clears her throat. Walt opens the door and positions himself to leave.

MAY ELLEN

How soon to send the proposal over?

WALT

Meeting's tomorrow. That is, if you can pull yourself away from the fun here.

MAY ELLEN

Didn't think I'd ever say this, Walt, but I'm impressed.

WALT

So am I.

MASTER BEDROOM

May Ellen whistles from the door, as if to a pet dog. In her bed, a shirtless, twentysomething STUD LOVER.

MAY ELLEN

Time to go. Something's come up.

STUD LOVER

I'll wait for you.

MAY ELLEN

I'm sure you will, but not here.

INT. ZEKE'S RANCH HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

LORETTA (60), a country-sweet plain Jane, reads in bed. She looks up from her book at Zeke, silent on a footstool, as he chews on a toothpick and stares at the wall.

LORETTA

You gonna tell me what's eating at you or make me guess?

ZEKE

Same old, same old, darlin'. Haley.

LORETTA

Forget about that little girl's power trip and come warm up your woman.

Loretta flips open the comforter as Zeke smiles back at her.

LORETTA (CONT'D)

And that's an order, cowboy.

INT. THE NICHOLS' HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Noah stands before Haley, who straightens his beige collar and smooths out his ivory sweater vest.

HALEY

Promise me you'll at least stay open, in case I think of something.

NOAH

I'll give up the ministry before partnering with Walt Greene.

HALEY

Don't be melodramatic.

NOAH

You're okay with the idea of this? A Tall-Cart on church grounds?

HALEY

As long as we come out ahead, I'd do just about anything. For you.

NOAH

Not me, I won't. Not a chance. Never.

HALEY

Name someone else we know who heads the biggest company in the world.

NOAH

Listen to me, I'm not doing it.

HALEY

They came to us, baby. We have the upper hand. If that isn't a sign ...

Haley fixes the wave in Noah's hair, then kisses his cheek.

HALEY (CONT'D)

... I don't know what is.

INT. GREENE MANOR - STUDY - DAY

Walt rests on a leather divan as the slick, silver-haired DR. BURKE (50) withdraws a vial of blood.

DR. BURKE

Checkup's almost through.

A medical cooler sits open beside them, but the contents are hidden. White PSD enters the room.

WHITE PSD

Sir, Ms. Price's car has arrived.

WALT

Patch me up, Doc. We'll save the rest for later. It's game-time.

EXT. CHRIST'S CROSS MEGACHURCH - DAY

A town car cuts across an expansive, empty parking lot and disappears into one of its parking garage tunnels.

INT. CHRIST'S CROSS MEGACHURCH - HALLWAY - DAY

Walt and May Ellen, commanding and impeccably presented, exit an elevator, head toward hallway's end, where Haley awaits.

MAY ELLEN
Don't forget, I do the talking.

WALT
Unless it's not going my way.

MAY ELLEN
Unless nothing.

CONFERENCE ROOM

May Ellen, Walt, and Haley enter a converted luxury box, glass-enclosed, which overlooks the church interior.

Zeke motions to the glass conference table, where Noah and SIX LAWYERS (three for each side) already sit.

ZEKE
Welcome, all. Have a seat.

WALT
What. A. View.

HALEY
God sure has blessed us.

WALT
Yes, I'd say He certainly has.

The room sits. Before them, on the table, are bound proposals and an architectural model of the church campus, its plaza bookended by Christ's Cross and a Tall-Cart store.

MAY ELLEN
Thanks for having us. Shall we jump right in and discuss terms?

ZEKE
Afraid we don't have pleasant news. While your offer was mighty attractive, we feel it's best our two names remain separate for now.

Walt and Haley meet eyes, but Haley looks away. Noah smirks.

MAY ELLEN
Mr. Perry, I was assured today was merely a formality. Crossing the "T's," if you will.

ZEKE
I understand your disappointment, Mrs. Price.

MAY ELLEN

It's Ms., and I don't think you do.

ZEKE

We figured, however wrong, it'd be better to inform you in person.

HALEY

So we don't close the door on any deals down the road and all.

Walt stands and strolls across the room to take in the church view once again. The room's attention follows, while May Ellen shoots him a fierce look, as if to stand down.

WALT

Zeke, is this an issue of faith?

ZEKE

It's more than that. Part-head, part-reluctance to unneeded change. Granddad called it Texas intuition.

MAY ELLEN

Change is precisely what you and your church need, no disrespect.

NOAH

You can't say "no disrespect" when all you mean is disrespect.

HALEY

Noah, she was simply making a point.

NOAH

We're more than open to change. If we weren't, this building would still be hosting basketball, not the Lord.

Noah picks at the model, then plucks a piece free.

MAY ELLEN

You have a nice thing here. State's biggest congregation. Pastor Noah's a natural in front of the camera. But the whole operation's bleeding cash.

ZEKE

Save lecturing for someone else.

HALEY

Now, Zeke, we should hear them out. The honesty's refreshing.

NOAH

It's not honest if it's not true.

MAY ELLEN

What's true is that bleeding cash didn't matter before the recession. Your flock was forking over donations faster than you could collect. But then that giving was gone overnight.

Walt appears far-removed from the business at hand. There's a calm to him as he overlooks the impressive church interior.

MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)

So, we dug deeper, including your superstar preacher here, who's been churning out self-help books at a desperate pace ever since.

ZEKE

Now, you wait one minute.

NOAH

Just because you're desperate doesn't mean we are.

Noah picks apart the model Tall-Cart, one piece at a time. The mini signage, the walls, the roof panels, the tall carts.

HALEY

She isn't wrong, Noah. Ms. Price, you were saying?

MAY ELLEN

Problem is, problem remains. You can barely keep the lights on. How long before the bills go unpaid for good?

ZEKE

The point of this lesson is what now?

NOAH

Nothing.

MAY ELLEN

We are offering a solution, and you have the gall to turn us away in the name of pig-headed stubbornness. No wonder you're a sinking ship.

ZEKE

We didn't grow this ministry to where it is today by jumping at every shiny offer that slides across this table.

MAY ELLEN

The only shine here, Mr. Perry, is you putting us on.

NOAH

I won't listen to another word of this, this bullshit!

HALEY

Noah!

Noah rips the mini Tall-Cart from the model, hurls it against the wall, and storms out of the room.

HALEY (CONT'D)

I apologize. My husband's a passionate man. Give us a minute.

Haley leaves. Zeke stands, followed by May Ellen.

ZEKE

Thanks for stopping by. We're done.

MAY ELLEN

Good luck in Chapter 11. We'll all miss the place. Then again, we could buy the church outright from your creditors and clean house of the cobwebs, and I'm looking at one right now. The Church of Tall-Cart, Mr. Perry. Think on that.

May Ellen heads out, followed by the Tall-Cart lawyers. Walt, though, lingers behind. He stops at the door.

WALT

Let's sweeten the deal, Zeke.

ZEKE

You're hard of hearing, Mr. Greene.

WALT

How about 10 million, cash, on top of our offer? That should pay the bills for a month or two.

ZEKE

Sure would. You got terms in mind?

WALT

Real estate lease for the store goes forward as is. This incentive is for an exclusive Pastor Noah product line.

(MORE)

WALT (CONT'D)

It's time to grow his brand, and that won't happen with a failed church.

ZEKE

No one has failed here.

WALT

Cut the shit, Zeke. You're about to.

Zeke mulls over the offer. He appears torn.

ZEKE

Got to think on it.

WALT

Absolutely not. You have one minute to decide. I suggest tapping into that Texas intuition and quick.

Zeke hurries out of the room.

SKYBOX WINDOW

Walt and May Ellen overlook the church interior and watch Haley, Zeke, and Noah argue, two suites down.

MAY ELLEN

They're even more dysfunctional than we are.

WALT

Isn't it great?

CONFERENCE TABLE

Haley, Zeke, and Noah stand across from Walt and May Ellen.

ZEKE

I know a deal when I hear one.

MAY ELLEN

Common sense prevails, thank God.

Zeke extends his hand to shake, but Haley stops him.

HALEY

Make it 20 million, not a penny less, and then we'll shake.

WALT

We have a deal, didn't you hear?

HALEY

It's a counter-offer. No deal yet.

ZEKE

I apologize. Haley's just worked up.

HALEY

Save it, Zeke. I won't sign for less than 20. Neither will Noah.

WALT

And I thought I was getting a friendly discount.

HALEY

This is the discount.

The room looks to Walt, who stares at Haley. A smile soon breaks across his face.

WALT

Well, then. Lady wins this round.

HALEY

Smart man not to refuse me.

WALT

You misunderstand. By winning this round, you've lost the fight.

HALEY

I don't follow.

Walt turns for the door, followed by May Ellen.

MAY ELLEN

You should have settled for 10.

ELEVATOR

Walt and May Ellen stand at opposite ends as they ride down.

MAY ELLEN

You better know what you're doing.

WALT

Your negotiating needs work. Less vinegar, May Ellen, more honey.

HALEY'S OFFICE

Haley throws open desk drawers frantically in a room half the size of Zeke's office.

HALEY

Damn it, where are they?

She finds a pair of large-blade scissors, flips open a Bible on her desk, and lifts the scissors high.

HALEY (CONT'D)

(looks upward)

I'm doing this for my husband.

Haley stabs the blades into the Bible pages.

PARKING GARAGE

Walt and May Ellen enter the Town Car, and it takes off.

HALEY (O.S.)

Stop! Stop! Stop!

Haley jumps in front of the car, which slams to a stop.

HALEY (CONT'D)

Thank you, God.

(holds up index finger)

One second.

Haley, Bible in hand, bends down, out of DRIVER's sight.

DRIVER

Miss, you okay? You need --

HALEY (O.S.)

Don't get out.

Haley, now winded, stands and fixes her outfit. She walks to the back of the car and knocks on the window with the Bible.

It rolls down to reveal Walt and, beyond him, May Ellen, both amused at Haley's obvious desperation.

WALT

(re: the Bible)

You're going to need a hell of lot more than that.

HALEY

It's all I have.

WALT

So, how much does that Good Book say to demand now? Thirty million?

HALEY

Only how little ladies shouldn't play hardball with big men.

WALT

Fool me once, Mrs. Nichols.

The window begins to close. Haley blocks it with the Bible.

HALEY

I highlighted a verse.

After some consideration, Walt grabs the Bible, opens it. He finds the pages hollowed out. In their place, thong panties.

WALT

This religion thing, I'm starting to see the light.

HALEY

Sunday's service. Come, let me make it up to you.

Walt closes the Bible and sets it on his lap.

WALT

And why would I do that, when I've got so much to read in here?

MAY ELLEN

Because there's still a vote.

WALT

Thank you, Ms. Price, but I was asking Mrs. Nichols.

HALEY

Because you don't settle for the cover when you can have the whole book.

WALT

I do love to read.

INT. GREENE MANOR - ARMORY - NIGHT

A window-less bunker with wall-to-wall displays of firearms and fired-at targets, where Walt fills shotgun shells with birdshot on a steel workbench.

Across from him stand Dr. Burke, Black PSD, and White PSD.

WALT

I've been invited to church this Sunday, rather persuasively, and I plan on attending. First time in, well, never.

DR. BURKE

I have just the thing to get you through. I'll get my prescription pad.

WALT

Excellent thinking, Doc, but I need to be more than alert for what I have in mind.

(to the PSDs)

Our friend, contact him. Set it up.

Walt rolls up his sleeve and looks to Dr. Burke.

WALT (CONT'D)

Time to finish that checkup.

EXT. FARM-TO-MARKET ROAD - NIGHT

A desolate stretch of backwoods. Roadside, a silver BMW M6 parks behind the yellow Hummer limousine. Black and White PSD stand at the ready.

WALT (V.O.)

Read up. There's a lot to review.

INT. HUMMER LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Walt, bourbon in hand, sits across from the darkly featured and darkly dressed MR. SHARP (40), who has the lean-muscled build of a long-distance runner.

Mr. Sharp examines the contents of a manila folder: Christ's Cross blueprints and images of the Nichols family.

WALT

Three shots. Two in the podium, don't stray one bit, followed by --

Walt rattles the ice in his glass to ensure full attention.

WALT (CONT'D)

Recall what was said about the third shot?

MR. SHARP

Of course.

WALT

Remember everything about it?

MR. SHARP

I do.

Walt holds the eye-contact until satisfied.

WALT

Terms as discussed. Payment, a week later. In that mailbox there.

Mr. Sharp looks to the lone mailbox across the road.

WALT (CONT'D)

And make it nice and loud. I want every one of those Bible-thumpers to shit themselves brown.

MR. SHARP

Consider it done.

The door opens from outside. Mr. Sharp grabs the folder.

WALT

Remember, friend, not before the boy's behind me.

EXT. CHRIST'S CROSS MEGACHURCH - DAY

Churchgoers, by the hundreds, file in from every direction.

INT. CHRIST'S CROSS MEGACHURCH - DAY

Noah, with Bible and kilowatt smile, crisscrosses the stage and looks out across the filled-to-capacity interior, which is romanticized by bejeweled, red and green lighting.

NOAH

I chose that holy hymn, because it reminds me, as we approach our Lord's birthday, to look past the hectic nature of the holidays ...

DISTANT UPPER DECK

Mr. Sharp, in church-wear, stands from his seat, then turns for the tunnel exit nearby.

NOAH

... Past its stampede of greed, past
its flurry of hurry, past the creep
of Christmas ...

VESTIBULE DOORWAY

Mr. Sharp picks the lock of an industrial door labeled
"RESTRICTED ACCESS" and enters.

NOAH (V.O.)

... And remember the sacrifices of
our Lord, Jesus, and how he alone is
the reason for the season!

CONGREGATION (V.O.)

Hallelujah!

ONSTAGE

Noah's oration gains momentum. He punctuates the delivery
with charged arm-pumps that electrify the building.

NOAH

Last night I prayed on how to lead
y'all through these confusing times,
and the good Lord gave His good word
to good ol' me. Pocket the plastic,
He said! Suspend the spending! And
invest instead in Jesus this holiday
season, because there would be no
Christmas without Christ!

The congregation hoots, hollers, and rises to their feet.

NOAH (CONT'D)

Tears in my eyes, I exclaimed, how
true the truth!

INDUSTRIAL HALLWAY

Mr. Sharp pushes a ceiling panel aside and pulls down a
black, nondescript duffel bag.

ONSTAGE

Haley and Nolan join Noah at stage-front. Noah looks to the
front row, where Walt sits with Zeke and Loretta.

NOAH

For today's closing prayer, I'd like to ask an old friend to join me onstage. Y'all know him as Tall-Cart's leading man. I know him as a stand-up guy, who's just recently welcomed the Lord back into his heart. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Walt Greene!

CONGREGATION

members turn to one another, in question and in disbelief, as Walt takes the stage. A gossipy buzz fills the arena.

UPPER CATWALK

Mr. Sharp descends a ladder in near darkness, while Walt joins Noah and family on the illuminated stage below. Noah then motions upward as the arena lights lower.

NOAH

Let us now reach for the sky.

WALT

lets an impressed smirk break across his face as the congregation raises its collective arms without hesitation.

ONSTAGE

They take each other's hands. As their heads bow and their eyes close, Haley steals an anticipatory glance at Walt.

NOAH

We thank you, dear Lord, for the beauty of bounty and the bounty of beauty you have bestowed upon us once again ...

UPPER CATWALK

Mr. Sharp crosses over the congregation to the arena center, then removes a bolt action rifle from the duffel bag.

NOAH

... May you continue to bless us with the radiance of your love and the clarity of your message ...

Mr. Sharp, with bipod attachment, sets the rifle amid a row of suspended spotlights, all off, and lines up his shot.

NOAH (CONT'D)

... With love in my heart and peace
in my mind, I turn my eyes to God
Almighty, and He says unto me ...

EVERYONE

... Praise it and amaze it!

NOAH

In the name of our Lord, Jesus ...

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Mr. Sharp pulls the trigger.

NOAH (V.O.)

... Amen.

A flash from the catwalk followed by a gunshot eruption.

UPPER CATWALK

Mr. Sharp fires again, but the spotlight shifts under the bipod and sends the shot errant.

He looks to the point of impact on the stage, inches from Walt's feet, then to Walt himself.

MR. SHARP

Shit.

Mr. Sharp returns his attention to the scope.

WALT'S POV

Walt grabs Nolan by the arm, then sweeps the boy behind him as a third shot erupts.

Blood bursts from Walt's abdomen. He falls to his knees.

Walt reaches out as Noah, Haley, and Nolan are rushed off the stage by headset-wearing church officials.

HALEY

Walt!

UPPER CATWALK

Mr. Sharp drops the shells in the duffle bag, then hurries toward the ladder. Below him, churchgoers scurry for safety.

ONSTAGE

Walt eyes the wounded stage mere inches in front of him, then looks to the now-empty catwalk above the arena center. His bloody side seems of the least concern.

WALT
Motherfucker.

EXT. CHRIST'S CROSS MEGACHURCH - DAY

Hundreds, and soon thousands, of panicked churchgoers pour out of the building and into the parking lot, as a fleet of law enforcement vehicles close in.

An ambulance, lights flashing and siren blaring, shoots out from under the arena-church and guns it down the road.

WALT (V.O.)
How many times did I say ...

INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

Walt, flat on his back, boils over as an EMT, who shifts with every vehicle turn, cuts open the bloody business shirt.

WALT
... Two in the podium, and do not,
for Christ's sake, stray?

Walt yanks the scissors from the EMT's bloody hand and hurls the pair toward the dashboard up front.

WALT (CONT'D)
Payment's changed. You hear me?

The ambulance driver turns back. It's Black PSD.

BLACK PSD
Yes, sir.

Walt turns to the EMT beside him (White PSD), snatches his Star of Life-logoed hat, and fires it at the back doors.

WALT
That so goddamn difficult?

INT. CHRIST'S CROSS MEGACHURCH - NIGHT

Crime scene investigation chaos occupies the church stage and nave. AUTHORITIES question what remains of the congregation.

EXECUTIVE HALLWAY

Zeke, haggard yet focused, walks with paunchy POLICE CHIEF.

ZEKE

Everything goes through me. Noah's too shook up to deal with anything.

POLICE CHIEF

Rightly so.

Zeke stops Police Chief with a stern hand on his shoulder.

ZEKE

I want those responsible hung and done for bringing this evil on us.

POLICE CHIEF

We'll get the bastards. Always do.

ZEKE

If you don't, someone else will.

POLICE CHIEF

I can't hear that, Zeke.

ZEKE

One way or another, hung and done.

NOAH'S OFFICE

More lounge than workspace. Everything from the carpet to the curtains beams white. Noah paces in front of an annoyed Haley and a weary Loretta, who has Nolan asleep on her lap.

NOAH

Him. Of all the people, why'd it have to be Walt onstage?

HALEY

Will you stop already? Five hours waiting for someone to tell us when we can go home is bad enough.

(stands up in frustration)

But hearing you whine about the wrong guy being in the wrong place at the right time is unbearable.

NOAH

Walt was shot at my church, which he attended at your invitation, then threw himself in front of our boy. How aren't we indebted to him?

LORETTA

Be grateful he was there, darling, and leave it at that. Please.

NOAH

Can't do it. We owe him bigger than big. I see it, clear as anything.

ZEKE

Carpet's ruined.

Zeke appears at the door. He points to Noah's shoes, which have smeared blood across the white carpet.

HALEY

Crap, Noah. Just had this put in.

ZEKE

I ain't paying to replace it.

HALEY

Nice. Today we're all but gunned down, and the only worry you got is money.

ZEKE

On your feet, Loretta. Time to go.

Loretta gets up from the couch and sets Nolan aside.

NOAH

Can't you see it's another sign?

HALEY

Yeah, that you didn't check your shoes. Stop moving already.

NOAH

I'm talking God's will here. We won't be rid of this burden until we repay Walt. Then, gone for good.

HALEY

God's will is for you to stand still and take off your shoes.

ZEKE

Then, get on home. Police cleared us all to go.

HALEY

About time. I need a hot bath.

Noah kicks off his shoes, then heads to the door.

NOAH

We stop at the hospital first.

HALEY

That can wait till tomorrow.

NOAH

No discussion. We're seeing Walt.

ZEKE

I'll give the ol' whiskey bottle your respects.

NOAH

You, too, Zeke.

EXT. HOUSTON GENERAL - NIGHT

A CANDLELIGHT VIGIL swells before a POLICE-guarded hospital entrance. A dozen NEWS CREWS camp out across the road.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Walt, in bed, holds his gown as a FAWNING NURSE bandages his abdomen. He eyes the creases of her gold-colored scrubs.

FAWNING NURSE

Your face is everywhere.

WALT

Just about.

Walt tickles Fawning Nurse, but a door-knock interrupts him. Haley enters, followed by Noah and Zeke.

HALEY

There's our hero!

WALT

Call security, hon. They're here to finish me off.

NOAH

Glad to see you're in good spirits.

WALT

It's the good service.

Walt pinches Fawning Nurse, who grabs a bloody dressing from the bed, in full view of everyone, and leaves the room.

NOAH
Dear Lord, Walt.

WALT
Looks worse than it is. Expecting a full recovery.

Zeke extends his hand to Walt, and they shake, while Noah pulls up a chair.

ZEKE
Darn good to hear the shot was through and through.

NOAH
What you did today, saving my boy's life, I won't ever forget it. Haley and me, forever in your debt.

WALT
Well, mission accomplished, then.

HALEY
Got any plans for Christmas Eve?

WALT
You asking me on a date in front of your husband? How daring.

NOAH
Give us the room, okay?

HALEY
Relax, baby. It was only a joke.

NOAH
Give us the room.

HALLWAY

Haley peers through the door's thin, waterglass window, while Zeke pulls a toothpick out from the lining of his ten-gallon.

HALEY
You need to talk some sense into him. Before he does something rash.

ZEKE
Give the man some space. For once.

Haley sees Noah pat the back of Walt, who points to the door.

HALEY

Mistake coming here so soon. Noah
thinks with his heart, not his head.

ZEKE

And you think with your fist.

HALEY

What he needs right now is rest, not --

Haley sees Noah tell a joke with exaggerated hand gestures,
to which Walt laughs. Noah then extends his hand to shake.

HALEY (CONT'D)

That.

HOSPITAL ROOM

Haley reenters in a hurry. Zeke's not far behind.

HALEY

What's so funny, you two?

WALT

We're business buddies. Well, almost.

NOAH

All we need is your approval.

HALEY

How can I approve when I don't have a
clue as to what's going on?

NOAH

Walt and I just agreed to that deal
we discussed a few days back.

Haley, now flustered, grows more so by the second.

HALEY

But you walked out on that, Noah.

NOAH

And I walked into this.

HALEY

Walked into what exactly? You're
making me nervous.

WALT

Same terms, less money.

HALEY

And now sick. Why would we ever accept less? I mean, besides being grateful and all, which we are.

NOAH

I'm repaying Walt for saving our boy. All 20 million, off the table.

HALEY

I don't believe my ears. Or my husband.

NOAH

It's the right thing to do.

ZEKE

The Christian way. I'm in.

HALEY

There's right, and then there's business. Y'all have obviously confused the two.

NOAH

No confusion. Business is right today.

HALEY

What am I supposed to say to that?

LATER

Walt, now alone, swings his legs off of the bed as Dr. Burke and Fawning Nurse return with a gold-monogrammed garment bag and a wheelchair.

DR. BURKE

Good news, Mr. Greene. You're being discharged.

WALT

The miracle of medicine.

Walt rips his dressing off to reveal a clean, unpunctured patch of skin, and tosses it to the doctor.

WALT (CONT'D)

Our checkups paid off, Doc.

DR. BURKE

With blood to spare.

WALT

Come on, sugar, let's get dressed.

Walt grabs Fawning Nurse's hand, who has the garment bag, and leads her toward the attached bathroom.

DR. BURKE

Not so fast, Walt. Remember, you're a wounded man.

MAY ELLEN (O.S.)

Or supposed to be.

May Ellen stands, arms-folded, at the door.

MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)

You look damn good for having been shot this morning.

WALT

Flesh wound's the best wound.

MAY ELLEN

Is that what you're calling it?

WALT

Deal's done. Lawyers are drawing up the contract as we speak.

MAY ELLEN

How much did she demand this time?

WALT

You mean, after I saved her son from a deranged gunman? Nothing.

MAY ELLEN

How calculating of you.

WALT

Took a page from the best.

Walt winks at May Ellen, then motions to the bathroom.

WALT (CONT'D)

Wanna join us? Could use your grip.

MAY ELLEN

You want an actual bullet today?

EXT. HOUSTON GENERAL - NIGHT

Dr. Burke pushes Walt and his wheelchair to the Hummer.

Walt clenches his fist victoriously toward those gathered, who cheer at the sight. May Ellen watches from the lobby.

WALT
Praise it and amaze it!

INT. HUMMER LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Walt hits a nearby button, which lowers the glass partition. Black and White PSD look back from the driver's cab.

WALT
It's time to wrap the presents.

INT. SOCIAL CLUB - NIGHT

Leather chairs, dim lighting, corporate power. May Ellen sits across from three INVESTORS (JOWLY, BEAKISH, CRANIAL) as a TUXEDOED WAITER delivers brandy snifters to their table.

MAY ELLEN
Drink up, gentlemen. We'll be celebrating soon.

Only May Ellen's glass raises.

JOWLY INVESTOR
Your man's making waves.

MAY ELLEN
Waves, I can handle.

CRANIAL INVESTOR
And these newcomers?

MAY ELLEN
Predictable. Controllable.

JOWLY INVESTOR
You didn't control that meeting as promised.

BEAKISH INVESTOR
As required.

MAY ELLEN
They needed a come-to-Jesus moment, and that's exactly what they got.

CRANIAL INVESTOR
What about the board?

MAY ELLEN

Right where I want them. In the dark.

BEAKISH INVESTOR

And your man, how's he recovering?

MAY ELLEN

Well enough.

CRANIAL INVESTOR

And the partnership?

MAY ELLEN

Announcement's on its way. Consider this Christmas the official start.

May Ellen again raises her glass to the investors, who look at one another, then back to her.

BEAKISH INVESTOR

We'll drink to that.

EXT. THE NICHOLS' NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

A glitzy community of light-adorned McMansions. At the gated entrance, heavy security blocks news crews and the paparazzi.

THE NICHOLS' HOME

A not-so-humble abode with a sheriff's car parked in front and two PLAIN-CLOTHED GUARDS on patrol alongside it.

INT. THE NICHOLS' HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Animal-print throw pillows, hollowly regal furniture, and a silver Christmas tree with purple lights and a treetop cross.

Haley, in a candy cane-striped sundress, peeks through the front curtains as Zeke plops down on a tiger-patterned love seat next to Loretta.

ZEKE

Now, the clicker. Ain't a real holiday till a game's on.

HALEY

There been any spike in ticket requests since the shooting?

ZEKE

Every Sunday service from now until
July is booked four times over.
(flips through channels)
Thought you had the sports package.

HALEY

Amazing. And tomorrow's service?

ZEKE

Crashed the dang system. We ought
to start charging admission.

HALEY

What about Easter requests?

ZEKE

We could have a month of Easter
Sundays and still turn people away.

A tipsy Noah empties a glass of eggnog with a long drink.

NOAH

Haley's getting an idea. Watch out.

LORETTA

And you're going to drown yourself.

Loretta takes Noah's glass from him as he downs another gulp.
Haley stands in front of the big-screen, blocks Zeke's view.

HALEY

What happens to all those requests
once we've filled the seats?

ZEKE

We hit delete. Seating's 17,000. No
getting around the fire code.

HALEY

But our requests are 10 times that.

NOAH

(returns to egg nog)
I'm 10 times thirsty.

LORETTA

Whatcha thinking, sweetie?

HALEY

We move our Easter service to a
bigger venue and cash in all this
newfound attention.

LORETTA

More like cashing in on some kind
of morbid curiosity.

ZEKE

We already have an arena. What do you
want now, a stadium?

HALEY

The biggest in town. Reliant Stadium.
Capacity's more than 80,000.

NOAH

That's a big number.

HALEY

The more people we have, the more
merchandise we sell and the more --

LORETTA

Money we make.

HALEY

Jackpot.

Noah returns to the armrest with a filled glass, while Zeke
leans back into the couch as he entertains the thought.

NOAH

I can see it. Strobe lights. Harness.
And a rock, resurrection-style. The
greatest Easter since the very first.

HALEY

That's my brilliant husband.

LORETTA

(turns to Zeke)
What's your verdict, handsome man?

ZEKE

This a one-time thing?

HALEY

That's all we'll need. The church
will be in the black, years to come.

LORETTA

Beauty and brains.

ZEKE

We barely have money to rent out a
banquet hall, let alone a stadium.

HALEY

What if it's not our money we're spending? What then?

ZEKE

That's something I can get behind.

EXT. FARM-TO-MARKET ROAD - NIGHT

Down from the mailbox drop-site, hidden in the darkness, sits a BMW M6 on the dirt shoulder, headlights off.

INT. BMW M6 - NIGHT

Mr. Sharp, behind the wheel and gun in hand, bounces his leg in nervous repetition and stares at the lone mailbox.

He cocks his handgun's hammer, eases it down, then repeats the process. His attention remains on the mailbox.

MR. SHARP

Fuck it.

Mr. Sharp clicks his headlights on.

EXT. FARM-TO-MARKET ROAD - NIGHT

The M6 peels off the shoulder, speeds down the road, then cuts a hard U-turn. It stops within reach of the mailbox.

The driver's side window lowers. Mr. Sharp cracks open the mailbox door. Inside are bundles of plastic-wrapped cash.

MR. SHARP

You, paranoid bastard.

He reaches in. A pair of headlights appear down the road.

MR. SHARP (CONT'D)

Shit.

Mr. Sharp aims his handgun toward the approaching vehicle, which soon reveals to be a black Town Car.

It stops beside the BMW, and out exits May Ellen.

MAY ELLEN

For Christ's sake, put that down. I'm not here to kill you. I'm your new employer.

MR. SHARP
I already have a job.

MAY ELLEN
Not for long.
(points to mailbox)
Your payment is wired for a bang.
Seems boss is unhappy with you.

MR. SHARP
Bullshit. Doesn't have it in him.

MAY ELLEN
His two ex-special forces do.

May Ellen shines a keychain light at the mailbox. Mr. Sharp spots green and gold wires running down its pole.

MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)
Point made?

INT. THE NICHOLS' HOME - NIGHT

Noah pours (and spills) champagne for Haley, Loretta, Zeke. Haley wipes her hand clean of champagne, raises her glass.

NOAH
Whoops. Since when they start making glasses so small?

HALEY
To Christ's Cross, rising from the dead.

ZEKE
Not quite how I'd put it.

FRONT DOOR

swings open. In steps Walt, in an awkwardly festive sweater (reindeer, snowflakes), followed by Santa-hatted Black and White PSDs, who carry massive mounds of gifts.

WALT
Merry Christmas, y'all! Santa sent me.
(to the PSDs)
Under the tree, boys.

ZEKE
Walt, we were just talking about you.

WALT

What a coincidence. I was just talking about myself, too.

HALEY

Look at you and that sweater.

WALT

And your dress. You look good enough to eat.

HALEY

Thanks. Noah picked it out.

NOAH

Got the sweet tooth and all.

Walt notices the spilled champagne down Noah's shirt, while the PSDs head back to the door, then outside.

WALT

How much have you had to drink?

NOAH

Not nearly enough. How's the battle wound?

WALT

Like nothing ever happened. It pays to pray, my brother.

Walt sees a gold-framed portrait of the Nichols, painted as Egyptian royalty, hanging above the mantle. A "MISS TEXAS" sash is draped across Haley, who's done up like Cleopatra.

WALT (CONT'D)

Now, that's what I call art. Haley, your taste hasn't changed one bit.

HALEY

Noah hates it, but I don't care.

NOAH

I don't hate it. I just like my art with legs. And animals.

Noah walks to the entryway and points to a Wild West painting of Americanized Jesus atop a muscled stallion at sunset.

WALT

Is that? Wow. Jesus on horseback.

NOAH

Whatcha think, Walt? Great, ain't it?

WALT
So good I have to go.
(to Zeke, Loretta)
Happy holidays. There are a few gifts
under the tree with your names on it.

ZEKE
Don't have to tell us twice.

Noah grabs Walt's arm.

NOAH
You can't leave yet. I was hoping
we'd get to talk. Like man-to-man.

WALT
Sounds like an ambush.

HALEY
Forgive Noah. He's had about a bowl
of eggnog. If there's any left, can I
get you a glass or something?

WALT
"Or something" sounds good.

Noah steps between Walt and Haley and breaks the flirtation.

NOAH
Last thing Walt needs is drinking and
driving. Oops. I say that?

WALT
I don't drive anymore.

NOAH
Course not. But wasn't for drinking
driving, my life wouldn't be so
great. I could even thank you.

HALEY
Noah, watch your mouth.

Haley laughs uneasily, then opens the door for Walt, who
waves off the awkwardness.

But the conversation takes its toll. Walt's face ices over,
his rich posture looks bankrupt, his hands clench into fists.

NOAH
My very own Miss Texas. Not in a
million years did I think she could
ever be mine. I mean, look at this
woman! Whoa!

Noah pulls Haley in for a half-hug. She resists the gesture.

HALEY

Noah, enough. Clearly, there's been too much to drink tonight.

NOAH

We gotta bury the past, that's what I want, so we move on from it all, and work together, like we want.

WALT

I have to go now.

Walt turns and walks out. To the street and to his Hummer.

HALEY

Thanks for the goodies, Walt. Don't be a stranger now. I'm so sorry!

No response. Haley watches Walt leave, then eases the door shut. She looks as if she wants to rip it from the hinges.

HALEY (CONT'D)

You're unbelievable, jeopardizing everything I've worked for.

NOAH

You're not the only one working.

HALEY

And you're not that drunk. There's barely any rum in the eggnog.

NOAH

I deserved to say my peace, and he deserved to hear it. End of story.

INT. HUMMER LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Walt pulls his reindeer sweater over his head, but his arms get caught inside.

WALT

Son of a bitch!

Walt breaks through, rips the sweater off, and hurls it across the limo. He fills a tumbler from the in-limo bar, then downs it. He pours another sloppily and throws it back.

WALT (CONT'D)

(to the PSDs up front)
Drive! Fucking drive!

EXT. FARM-TO-MARKET ROAD - NIGHT

May Ellen opens the driver's side BMW door for Mr. Sharp.

MAY ELLEN
Leave the keys in the ignition.

As Mr. Sharp steps out, two more headlights appear down the road. He readies his gun as an unmarked van pulls up.

MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)
Relax, they're with me. Now, I need your things. Wallet, watch, that.

May Ellen takes the gun from Mr. Sharp, who then puts his belongings on the car roof.

Two HIRED HANDS exit from the back of the van. They pull out an occupied body bag and set it beside the BMW.

MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)
Go ahead and undress, too.

The hired hands unzip the bag to expose a CORPSE (male, 40, white), then dress it with Mr. Sharp's clothes, belongings.

MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)
Now, is that gun you used at church still in the trunk?

MR. SHARP
Don't know what you're talking about.

MAY ELLEN
You should work on your lying.

The hired hands set the corpse in the driver's seat.

MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)
They'll take you to the airport. Stay gone until I call. Are we clear?

MR. SHARP
How am I supposed to fly? You took everything.

May Ellen hands Mr. Sharp a clear bag (cell phone, passport, plane ticket, string of numbers), as the hired hands plant explosives in the BMW.

MAY ELLEN
All you'll need to disappear. The numbers are to an offshore account. It's double what's in the mailbox.

MR. SHARP
Double's good.

MAY ELLEN
Not that you deserve it after such
sloppy shooting.

MR. SHARP
Won't happen again.

MAY ELLEN
Better hope so. Time to disappear.

May Ellen returns to her Town Car as the hired hands escort Mr. Sharp to the van, in which sits Jaded and Nymphet Teen.

The vehicles drive off, in opposite directions. Fifty yards down the road, the BMW erupts as a double-explosion ignites.

INT. GREENE MANOR - GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

An under-furnished, two-story-tall cavern with a flickering fire in a grand, walk-in fireplace.

Walt, thoroughly plastered, drinks fireside and eyes a line of old-world portraits high on the opposite wall: Grandfather Greene, Father Greene, Billy, and Walt himself.

WHITE PSD
Sir, the feeds are up.

White PSD sets a tablet beside Walt, who doesn't acknowledge the delivery. On the tablet, four feeds stream live footage, all from within the Nichols' living room.

DOORWAY

White and Black PSD watch Walt from across the room.

WHITE PSD
We need to hide the guns tonight.

BLACK PSD
Already done.

WALT

stares at Billy's portrait with bloodshot eyes as he refills his glass from a crystal-cut decanter, then empties it in a single gulp. He pours again.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB - COAT ROOM - NIGHT

A coat-less coat room, lined with drop cloths and paint cans, primed for a fresh coat.

SUPER: FIFTEEN YEARS EARLIER

An extended nasal snort gives way to the appearance of YOUNG WALT (35), carefree and cocky, as he wipes his nose clean.

YOUNG WALT
Damn, that's good.

Young Walt hands a rolled bill to YOUNG MAY ELLEN (30), more good-time girl than career woman, who snorts a line herself.

YOUNG WALT (CONT'D)
I better get. Thanks for the blow.

Young Walt swigs from a bottle of Jack Daniels, then turns to leave. Young May Ellen grabs his crotch.

YOUNG MAY ELLEN
What about my blow?

YOUNG WALT
(jingles car keys)
I'm driving.

YOUNG MAY ELLEN
But I've got the stick.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Clean-cut BILLY GREENE (25), a Young Republican poster boy with windswept hair, hugs and holds YOUNG HALEY (20), a belle as pouty as she is pretty, on wet, after-storm pavement.

YOUNG HALEY
If your brother makes me wait one more minute, I'm gonna scream.

BILLY
I have no idea where he is, pumpkin.

YOUNG HALEY
That's it. I'm screaming.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB - COAT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Young Walt picks Young May Ellen up, mid-kiss, and drops her on a table. They undress each other with hurried passion.

YOUNG MAY ELLEN
You think about what I said?

YOUNG WALT
You need to drink more.

YOUNG MAY ELLEN
Maybe if we got engaged ...

Young Walt pours a splash of whiskey into Young May Ellen's mouth, then kisses her neck and chest.

YOUNG MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)
... Your daddy would rethink Billy succeeding him.

YOUNG WALT
Your dream, baby, not mine.

YOUNG MAY ELLEN
I want it for both of us.

YOUNG WALT
I'm no Billy. And you're no Haley.

YOUNG MAY ELLEN
What do you mean by that?

Young May Ellen pulls back.

YOUNG WALT
Your skirt, hike it up.

YOUNG MAY ELLEN
No. Tell me.

Young Walt steps back from the table. He zips up his pants.

YOUNG WALT
I gotta go.

YOUNG MAY ELLEN
Don't fault me for taking charge. One of us has to.

YOUNG WALT
You know what, it's best you don't call.

YOUNG MAY ELLEN
You're dumping me?

YOUNG WALT
You can keep your job.

YOUNG MAY ELLEN
Screw you. I'm good at what I do!

Young May Ellen shoves Young Walt hard in the chest.

YOUNG WALT
Yeah, fucking your way to the top.

YOUNG MAY ELLEN
The top? Please. I'd be sucking off
Billy if that were true, not you.

Young Walt backhands Young May Ellen hard. She wipes blood
from her mouth, then narrows her eyes.

YOUNG MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)
What, too close to home?

YOUNG WALT
You should learn when to shut up.

YOUNG MAY ELLEN
How's this for shutting up?

Young May Ellen kicks Young Walt in the groin. He keels over.

YOUNG WALT
You, bitch!

YOUNG MAY ELLEN
I was thinking the same thing. Get
ready for a lawsuit, prick.

Young May Ellen heads for the door. Young Walt hits her from
behind, then throws her back to the table.

YOUNG WALT
Not so fast, whore.

Young Walt bends Young May Ellen over the table, then yanks
her panties down from behind.

YOUNG MAY ELLEN
Don't you fucking dare! Stop!

YOUNG WALT
Drink up. You need to relax.

Young Walt dumps whiskey over Young May Ellen's head. As she
starts a pained scream, Young Walt strikes her silent.

YOUNG WALT (CONT'D)
Louder you get, baby, harder I hit.

YOUNG MAY ELLEN
You can't do this.

YOUNG WALT
Bet me.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

A silver Rolls-Royce Phantom VI fishtails around a turn, then speeds toward Billy, Young Haley, and their parents.

On one side, the moneyed and emotionally neutral FATHER and MOTHER GREENE (60s). On the other, their less stuffy, more ordinary middle-class counterparts, MR. and MRS. REY (50s).

MOTHER GREENE
Who gave Walt the keys?

BILLY
Stand back, Mama.

The Rolls, with Walt behind the wheel, skids to a stop in front of a late-90s Chevy Suburban, the Rey family vehicle.

YOUNG HALEY
Jesus, Walt. Crazy much?

YOUNG WALT
Bride's still got her lip.

FATHER GREENE
Where the hell've you been?

YOUNG WALT
Training your PR girl, old man.

MOTHER GREENE
You be nice to her, Walter.

YOUNG WALT
Whatever, ma. Kiss your bride, bro.
Champagne room waits for no man.

YOUNG HALEY
Now he's in a hurry.

Young Haley and Billy embrace, kiss, whisper to one another, while the parental pairs enter their respective vehicles.

YOUNG WALT
Save it for the honeymoon.

BILLY

Don't know if I can. Or want to.

MOTHER GREENE

William, it's bad form to discuss
your love life in public.

FATHER GREENE

Mother's right. Let's go, son.

BILLY

Can't wait to see you in the dress.

YOUNG HALEY

Don't make me cry.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB - COAT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A bloody and half-naked May Ellen lies on a whiskey-wet drop
cloth, in the fetal position, and weeps.

Her skirt, ripped. Her panties, around her ankles.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The Rolls-Royce guns it past the Suburban, then speeds down a
slick, two-lane, countryside stretch.

YOUNG HALEY (V.O.)

Daddy, you promised no rain!

INT. CHEVY SUBURBAN - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Rey drives. Haley rides shotgun. Mrs. Rey sits in back.

MR. REY

Storm's passed, baby-girl.

MRS. REY

Clear skies for your big day, honey,
I prayed on it.

YOUNG HALEY

Mama, enough churchy bullshit!

MR. REY

Haley Rey, language!

YOUNG HALEY

Me? It's my wedding!

ROLLS-ROYCE

glides over the centerline as it nears a bend in the road.

CHEVY SUBURBAN

Haley glares ahead as the Rolls swerves between lanes.

YOUNG HALEY

Call Billy, Mama. Tell him his
madman brother needs to stop it.

MRS. REY

Stop what, honey?

A flash of brake lights from the Rolls, followed by an abrupt
skid. The Rolls over-corrects with a jerk, then tumbles.

Off the road and out of sight.

YOUNG HALEY

Daddy, where'd they go? Daddy!

Mr. Rey slams the brakes.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The Suburban skids to a stop. Haley and her parents jump out.

YOUNG HALEY

No. No. No.

In a ditch, the Rolls, now crumpled. Its windows, spiderweb-
cracked. Young Haley rushes down the slope.

YOUNG HALEY (CONT'D)

Billy!

MR. REY

Baby-girl, wait.

ROLLS-ROYCE

Bleeding gashes and broken limbs. No apparent survivors.

Young Haley yanks desperately at the passenger door. The
handle doesn't budge. Mr. and Mrs. Rey descend the slope.

YOUNG HALEY

Billy, I'm here. I'm here.

Young Haley grabs a rock from the ground and smashes it against, then through, the passenger-side window. The glass shatters. Her hand slices.

YOUNG HALEY (CONT'D)
Talk to me, baby. Say you're okay.

MR. REY
It's too late, Haley.

Young Haley pulls herself through the window and grasps Billy's lifeless face in her hands.

YOUNG HALEY
I'm here, baby. Come back to me.

Tears pour down her face. Her parents can only watch.

YOUNG HALEY (CONT'D)
Don't go, baby. Don't leave me.
Please don't go. Please, baby.

INT. GREENE MANOR - GREAT ROOM - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT DAY

Walt trips over himself as he heaves his half-empty tumbler into the fireplace, which bursts and sends flames shooting.

The PSDs enter, ready to engage a threat, but find Walt on a knee, unable to stand, a drunken mess of self-loathing.

BLACK PSD
(to White PSD)
Take a side.

The PSDs each wrap an arm of Walt's around their shoulders, then carry him through the room. Walt's legs drag behind.

WHITE PSD
Let's get you upstairs, sir.

WALT
(in a mumble)
He said, have her, lucky to have her.
It's Billy, always Billy.

EXT. CHRIST'S CROSS MEGACHURCH - DAY

Throngs of congregation members file through dense security checkpoints at the arena entrances.

Arena-wide clapping steadily builds.

INT. CHRIST'S CROSS MEGACHURCH - DAY

A packed, holiday-dressed house. The choir and congregation clap in an anticipatory rhythm. At stagefront stands a wall of bullet-proof glass. SECURITY GUARDS line the aisles.

The arena lights lower. The stage spotlights swirl and flash.

ARENA ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Give it up for our first family of
faith! Make some Christmas noise!

The congregation cheers as Noah crosses the stage with Haley and Nolan. Noah then extends his arm toward the back of the stage, where Walt appears, on greene-colored crutches.

The building stands in ovation and roars with approval as Walt struggles to stagefront.

CHOIR & CONGREGATION
Walt! Walt! Walt!

PRESS ROOM

Noah, Haley, and Walt sit at a heavily microphoned table before REPORTERS in an over-capacity room.

HALEY
Shall we let 'em in on the big news?

NOAH
Big news? It's huge news.

The reporters urge them to continue.

WALT
No, I'm not pregnant.

HALEY
(off room-wide laughter)
This guy, y'all, isn't he funny?

EXT. TALL-CART CONSTRUCTION SITE / CHRIST'S CROSS - DAY

Golde hard hats, greene shovels. Walt, Haley, Noah, Zeke, May Ellen pose on a dirt plot. A PHOTOGRAPHER SWARM snaps away.

Behind them, a banner: GRAND OPENING / THIS SPRING.

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

Hundreds of THRILLED CUSTOMERS, with Pastor Noah self-help books in hand, wait in line for

Noah, who holds court with a Sharpie, flanked by two BURLY SECURITY GUARDS, and signs title page after title page.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

Noah, Haley, and Walt chitchat and chuckle with a CABLE NEWS INTERVIEWER under bright lights.

NOAH

Christianity with a commercial twist.

WALT

Who wouldn't want Jesus at a cash register?

HALEY

I've been saying it for years, Bob, people deserve a better, a higher, option when it comes to shopping.

NOAH

And there's no higher shopping than Tall-Cart.

CABLE NEWS INTERVIEWER

And why is that?

WALT

It's in the name.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

A brown and beige pickup pulls up to a drab brick building.

ZEKE (V.O.)

Burnt to a crispy pile of nothing ain't exactly wrapped in a bow ...

INT. POLICE STATION - CHIEF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Zeke examines crime scene photos across from Police Chief.

ZEKE

... Thought this was good news.

POLICE CHIEF

The bastard may not be hung, Zeke,
but he's sure as hell done.

In the photos, scraps of money litter the ground around the charred BMW, exploded mailbox, and barbecued corpse.

ZEKE

Payment went south of south.

POLICE CHIEF

Don't you confuse this for anything
but a win. Even matched the gun in
the trunk. Case closed. Rest on easy.

ZEKE

Too easy, if you're asking me. And
I'll tell Noah. He won't be happy.
(re: the photos)
I'm taking these.

POLICE CHIEF

How's Loretta put up with your shit?

ZEKE

Better than you.

INT. RELIANT STADIUM - CONCESSION HALL - DAY

Haley walks with two JOCKS-TURNED-EXECUTIVES (MUSCLED and FLATTOP) toward an open set of exit doors.

HALEY

Got a real gem here, fellas. I'm
almost envious. Thanks for the tour.
Call anytime. See y'all on Easter.

The Executives look to another, then back to Haley.

MUSCLED STADIUM EXEC

Mrs. Nichols, not to be rude, but
today wasn't just about the tour.

HALEY

Have I missed something?

FLATTOP STADIUM EXEC

The second half of the stadium
deposit, it's due.

HALEY

Don't you mean next week? I could
have sworn it was next week.

MUSCLED STADIUM EXEC

That was true, last week. This week,
it's today.

HALEY

In that case, I'd like to introduce
you handsome, charming gentlemen to
my three favorite letters: I.O.U.

The Executives crack smiles, then reluctantly turn to each other and discuss the matter privately. A short conference later, they look to Haley.

MUSCLED STADIUM EXEC

Balance of the deposit, next week, no
later. Full payment by Easter week.

FLATTOP STADIUM EXEC

Doors won't open without both.

HALEY

Y'all are too sweet.

INT. ZEKE'S RANCH HOME - NIGHT

Humble-hodgepodge decor: country-plaid furniture and crochet throws, shag carpet and taxidermied hunting trophies.

DINING ROOM

Loretta eats across a white-wood table from Zeke, who butters his baked potato. His plate is otherwise untouched.

On the table, a crystal, cross-shaped clock, which stands apart from its kitschy surroundings.

LORETTA

You act like he hasn't been caught.
Crying out loud, he was barbecued.

ZEKE

Nothing but a decoy. And they fell
for it. Professionals, my knee.

LORETTA

I know that look, Ezekiel, and I
don't like it one bit. Leave the
policing to the police, you hear?

ZEKE

You're right. Hank needs an extra
pair of eyes on this.

Zeke's potato bleeds yellow, but he continues to add butter.

LORETTA

You're not even paying attention to what I'm saying. Let alone to what you're doing. Potato's about drowned.

ZEKE

That money implies payment, which implies employment, which implies a boss, who's none too pleased.

Zeke reaches out to cut yet another slab, but Loretta moves the butter tray out of his reach.

LORETTA

If you think I'm letting you eat all that cholesterol, you're dead wrong. It's going to the dogs.

Zeke stands from the table and kisses Loretta on her head.

ZEKE

Heading back in. Thanks for dinner, dumplin'. Delicious.

LORETTA

You never took a single bite.

ZEKE

May be late. Better not wait up.

LORETTA

I stopped waiting up 20 years ago.

INT. THE NICHOLS' HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Noah writes on a legal pad in bed. Haley applies pore strips to her face at a vanity, before a golde-leafed jewelry tree.

Inscribed on its trunk: SANTA SAYS MERRY XMAS.

NOAH

Jesus, appease us! Care about prayer! Restimony with a testimony!

HALEY

Not bad. Not good. What the --

The center of the jewelry tree catches Haley's eye, where there appears to be a miniature, hidden lens.

NOAH
 Didn't like the last one?

HALEY
 Hmm.

Haley moves to a dresser, where she examines a crystal, cross-shaped clock. She finds a tiny, all-but-imperceptible lens surrounded by the inscription: PRAISE WALT AND AMAZE WALT.

NOAH
 Haley?

HALEY
 I don't believe it.

NOAH
 I think it can sway some to pray.
 Hey, that's good. Sway to pray.

The night stand. Haley picks up a diamond-encrusted picture frame (TO OUR FUTURE, WG) and finds yet another lens.

HALEY
 He's good.

NOAH
 At this rate, I'll be ready for our
 big Easter service by the morning.

HALEY
 (to the frame)
 Well done, honey.

Haley positions the frame toward the bed, then does the same with the clock and the jewelry tree. Her demeanor turns sultry as she peels off her pore strips.

HALEY (CONT'D)
 Hearing you work is such a turn on.

NOAH
 There's more where that came from.

HALEY
 Let me have it, big man.

NOAH
 Subjugate, for Heaven's sake!

HALEY
 Ooh, that's a message I can get
 behind. Or on top of.

Haley climbs onto Noah's lap, then flings his legal pad across the room. She slips a strap of her nightgown down.

NOAH
The lights are still on.

HALEY
I want him to see.

NOAH
Who, Jesus?

Haley pushes Noah flat on his back. She reverse straddles him and looks straight at the jewelry tree lens.

HALEY
No more talking.

EXT. TALL-CART CONSTRUCTION SITE / CHRIST'S CROSS - NIGHT

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS pour a concrete foundation as cranes unload trucks of prefab walls. Zeke's pickup passes by.

INT. CHRIST'S CROSS MEGACHURCH - SECURITY OFFICE - NIGHT

A SECURITY GUARD scans a wall of monitors, each broadcasting a different part of the megachurch. Zeke knocks on the door.

SECURITY GUARD
Mr. Perry, you're here awful late.

ZEKE
Long as I'm not too late.

INT. GREENE MANOR - STUDY - NIGHT

Walt watches a wall of flatscreens, which display live feeds of the Nichols' master bedroom. Haley plays to the cameras.

HALEY (V.O.)
How's that feel?

Walt pulls thong panties (the Bible pair) from his pocket and places them over his mouth and nose like an oxygen mask.

WALT
So good, I could smell it.

INT. CHRIST'S CROSS MEGACHURCH - SECURITY OFFICE - NIGHT

Zeke focuses in on a monitor, which shows Walt onstage with Noah, Haley, and Nolan on the day of the shooting.

ZEKE

Bring it up to the first shot.

Security Guard speeds through the footage, stops on blood squirting from Walt's abdomen, then reverses it.

ZEKE (CONT'D)

That's good. Now, creep through it.

The footage plays in slow motion. Noah concludes his prayer, then jumps as the podium splinters upon impact of the bullet.

ZEKE (CONT'D)

Let's see that again. This time, zoom in on Walt there. And up the sound.

Security Guard reverses the footage, focuses on Walt, then replays it. Zeke leans in for a closer look.

NOAH (V.O.)

I turn my eyes to God Almighty, and
He says unto me --

ZEKE

And freeze. Now, make his head big. I
want to see his eyes.

The footage shows Walt mid-flinch. Security Guard backs it up, then lets it roll again.

NOAH (V.O.)

I turn my eyes to God Almighty --

ZEKE

Stop right there.

The footage stops and catches Walt looking to the catwalk.

ZEKE (CONT'D)

Something tells me that ain't God
Almighty he's looking at.

ARENA INTERIOR

Zeke takes his place onstage as the interior lights power on, a match to the lighting on the day of the shooting. He peers at the catwalk, but it's too dark to make anything out.

ZEKE

Now, why look all the way up there.
(beat)
Unless you know what's coming.

INT. TEXAS STATE CAPITOL - CORRIDOR - DAY

Walt walks with a male POLITICAL AIDE. White and Black PSD follow behind, at a distance.

WALT

Gov and me, we go way back. Got the buck's cherry popped. A damn mess.

May Ellen appears ahead, from behind a pillar.

WALT (CONT'D)

Give me a minute, kid. I know my way around.

POLITICAL AIDE

I was directed to stay with you, sir, until after the photo opp.

WALT

Christ, get lost.

Out with the aide, who hovers nearby, and in with May Ellen.

MAY ELLEN

Skinnier than your other goons.

WALT

You're keeping a powerful man waiting. And the Governor.

MAY ELLEN

Our favorite preacher's wife is writing bad checks.

WALT

I've been too busy making public appearances as a good Christian to know what you're talking about.

MAY ELLEN

She hasn't mentioned Easter to you?

WALT

Not to me personally. Let me guess, she loves the eggs.

ROTUNDA

Walt and May Ellen pass through. PSDs trail behind.

MAY ELLEN

She booked Reliant Stadium for their Easter service, but she's stalling payment.

WALT

She should have settled for 10.

MAY ELLEN

Normally, I'd agree, but the Board has a hunt on Saturday, and the last thing you want discussed is our new partner's financial recklessness.

Walt stops on the state seal.

WALT

And I care about this why?

MAY ELLEN

As far as the Board knows, the partnership was your grand idea.

WALT

That's how I remember it.

MAY ELLEN

Well, as the mastermind, you reflect the Nichols, for better or worse.

WALT

Easy on the wedding bells.

MAY ELLEN

All I'm suggesting is to help her out. Do whatever it takes.

WALT

You mean, pay whatever it takes.

INT. ZEKE'S RANCH HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Loretta rinses rooster-painted plates in the sink. Zeke sips from a horse-head coffee cup and peers out of a window.

LORETTA

You're grasping at straws again.

ZEKE

Not in the slightest. It couldn't have been an easier shot, but all three rounds missed. Badly, too.

LORETTA

Walt would disagree.

ZEKE

Unobstructed line of sight. Ideal perch. Still targets. I could do better behind my back, upside down.

LORETTA

You're a real Wild Bill, I know.

INT. TEXAS STATE CAPITOL - SENATE CHAMBER - DAY

Walt and May Ellen enter. Across the room, Noah and Haley rub elbows with a slick POLITICO, who waves to Walt.

MAY ELLEN

This problem may seem small to you, but it could easily take us down, if not properly handled.

WALT

Then, handle it.

MAY ELLEN

I am, by talking to you. We're too close to the finish line for this.

WALT

Honey, if anyone goes down, you can bet your ass it won't be me.

MAY ELLEN

Does that mean you'll help her?

WALT

Help isn't how I'd put it.

INT. MERCHANDISE FACTORY - DAY

Scores of Pastor Noah figures slide down a conveyor belt.

WALT (V.O.)

Should we go down?

MANAGERIAL CROW'S NEST

Haley and Walt survey the production floor below, where Noah, out of earshot, tours with a BLUE-COLLAR FOREMAN.

HALEY

Let Noah deal with it. I've wanted to get you alone for awhile now.

WALT

And now you've got me.

HALEY

I've been thinking about how you can make the Easter of my dreams happen.

WALT

Tell me it at least ends with one of us in a bunny costume.

HALEY

If I get my way, we'll do a lot more than wear bunny costumes.

WALT

Why wait till then? Let's go now.

Haley waves to Noah as he leaves the floor below, then turns to face Walt and narrows her eyes as a seductress would.

HALEY

Because Easter is when I'm going to give you the fuck of your life.

EXT. ZEKE'S RANCH HOME - BARN - NIGHT

Loretta feeds horses as Zeke chews on a toothpick.

ZEKE

And the money doesn't fit. Results were cheap, messy. And that BMW ain't the vehicle of a sloppy shot.

LORETTA

What's his car got to do with it?

ZEKE

And all that wasted cash, neither. Result and price don't add up.

LORETTA

You think whoever shot those shots meant to miss? Now, who's crazy?

ZEKE

Opposite's what I'm saying.

LORETTA

You don't think the shots missed?

ZEKE

I'm saying him getting Kentucky-fried was his boss tying up loose ends, and I'm saying his boss was the one shot.

LORETTA

Walt? Who, in their right mind, would shoot themselves?

ZEKE

Shooting sure turned Noah around. He couldn't shake Walt's hand fast enough. Hand of the hero.

INT. MERCHANDISE FACTORY - LOADING DOCK - DAY

Blue-Collar Foreman leads Noah around hundreds of pallets of boxed merchandise.

NOAH

Remarkable. This much every day?

BLUE-COLLAR FOREMAN

Plus the same production from 22 other factories across the country.

OFFICE

Noah scans a table of Pastor Noah merchandise: Bible covers, Jesus-cross keychains, hand sanitizer dispensers, etc.

NOAH

Look at all of it. Amazing.

MANAGERIAL CROW'S NEST

Haley stands close to Walt. And inches closer.

HALEY

Picture the biggest Easter service imaginable as the perfect lead-in to Noah's product line launch and your store's grand opening.

WALT
How big is the biggest?

Haley caresses Walt's arm.

HALEY
Reliant Stadium big. Eighty-thousand
big. Walt Greene big.

WALT
Big costs big.

HALEY
Not for pockets as deep as yours.

WALT
How deep are you asking me to dig?

HALEY
Barely at all. Ten million.

WALT
You and 10 million. That the only
number you know?

INT. ZEKE'S RANCH HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Loretta crochets on the couch. Zeke works through a bowl of
jelly beans in a weathered recliner.

ZEKE
Hero because the shooting. Shooting
because the what, I don't know.

LORETTA
Let sleeping dogs lie, Ezekiel. No
good can come from this.

ZEKE
Tell me one thing: who benefited?

LORETTA
You did as much as the Tall-Cart
folks. Don't forget those were
desperate times before the deal.

ZEKE
I wouldn't put it past 'em, either.

INT. MERCHANDISE FACTORY - MANAGERIAL CROW'S NEST - DAY

Haley runs her hands across Walt's waist.

HALEY

If Easter's a success, we could have the beginning of a global ministry.

WALT

You and me, teasing each other around the world?

HALEY

Imagine the money we'd rake in. Think of the markets to tap. One Sunday opens the door to it all.

WALT

One Sunday and my money.

HALEY

We use Easter to show investors what could be. What should be.

WALT

So, my pockets aren't the only ones you're reaching into?

HALEY

How many pockets I reach into is up to you, but a lady's gotta reach into someone's.

Haley reaches deep into Walt's pocket.

HALEY (CONT'D)

Tell me you're not interested.

WALT

I won't lie. My interest is piqued.

HALEY

I know, I can feel it. Just like I can feel you watching me. In my home.

WALT

Now, now, you don't seem to mind.

HALEY

My husband would. And before you ask, yes, that's a threat.

WALT

You think like a Greene.

Haley grips her hand inside Walt's pocket.

HALEY
Do I act like one?

NOAH (O.S.)
Walt, you dog ...

Haley removes her hand. She and Walt turn to find Noah below with life-sized, cardboard cut-outs of Walt and himself.

NOAH (CONT'D)
... These are fantastic!

INT. ZEKE'S RANCH HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Loretta, eye mask on snug, tries to fall asleep. Zeke lies in bed, wide-awake, and stares at the popcorn ceiling.

ZEKE
What gets me is why I'm alone in asking the proper questions here.

LORETTA
No one but you wants to keep living that nightmare. Good night now.

ZEKE
I don't see it. Connection's there, I know so, but can't see it clear.

LORETTA
If you don't quit this, right now, and let me sleep, I'll skip the middle-man and shoot you myself.

ZEKE
Alright, don't shoot. I rest my case.

Zeke clicks off his bedside lamp.

EXT. HUNTING FIELD - DAY

A cloud of doves rises from a golden stretch of grass. May Ellen, covered in camo, takes aim and fires.

EXT. HUNTING LODGE - DAY

May Ellen and BOARD MEMBERS (SMUG, LEAN, ELDER, etc.) unwind beside a mountain of dead doves and spent shotgun shells.

BIRD BOYS clean up after the shoot.

ELDER BOARD MEMBER

Our boss, once again, wins the day's count. Nice shooting.

LEAN BOARD MEMBER

Knowing you, May Ellen, all those doves were paid to take a dive.

MAY ELLEN

Don't worry, men, the length of my dick is only figurative.

INT. HUNTING LODGE - LOUNGE - DAY

Board Members swish brandy and smoke cigars. May Ellen drinks a Bloody Mary.

MAY ELLEN

Not until we know how all this visibility affects him.

SMUG BOARD MEMBER

Don't tell me that's worry I hear in your voice.

MAY ELLEN

That's pragmatism, gained from 15 years of cleaning up after Walt.

LEAN BOARD MEMBER

Walt's done one hell of a job. The Christian market, too. Brilliant.

MAY ELLEN

Doesn't mean he's off his leash.

ELDER BOARD MEMBER

He's earned some slack, finally putting his stamp on the company.

SMUG BOARD MEMBER

And in spectacular fashion. Tough son of a bitch. Bona fide hero.

MAY ELLEN

Try to contain your pleasure, men. You sound like schoolgirls, and schoolgirl hearts break so easily.

EXT. TALL-CART CONSTRUCTION SITE / CHRIST'S CROSS - DAY

Cranes lower roof segments onto the big box skeleton.

TIME-LAPSE (NIGHT to DAY)

-- WORKERS attach green and gold signage to the all-but-finished building's marquee.

-- EMPLOYEES unload pallets from Tall-Cart delivery trucks.

INT. CHRIST'S CROSS MEGACHURCH - NOAH'S OFFICE - DAY

Noah and Haley look over mock-up sketches of a stadium stage, designed to resemble a rocky hillside.

HALEY

Doesn't it just feel right? You,
Easter, Jesus.

NOAH

And my Mary.

Noah pulls Haley close. They kiss like newlyweds.

ZEKE

clears his throat from the doorway. In hand, 8x10 photos.

ZEKE

Got something that can't wait.

HALEY

We're busy, Zeke. Leave, please.

ZEKE

Like I said, this can't wait.

Zeke hands Noah photos of mid-prayer, security footage stills of Noah and co., onstage, on the day of the shooting.

ZEKE (CONT'D)

What you're looking at is proof of
an unfortunate nature, hate to say.

NOAH

Of what exactly?

ZEKE

A bullet he knew was coming.

In the photos, Walt's eyes are open and looking upward.

NOAH

Who, Walt? Because his eyes are open?
That's some stretch.

ZEKE

A link to that lunatic who tried to
gun you and your family down.

HALEY

Lunatic is right.

ZEKE

Walt took that lunatic's bullet, yes,
but I'm sure he also hired the gunman
to shoot himself. To sway you into
the deal.

NOAH

Is this your only proof?

HALEY

If you can even call it that.

ZEKE

Look at his eyes. Why else would he
be looking up there? He knew those
shots were coming.

NOAH

It's a prayer, Zeke. Some look up,
some down. My eyes are closed.

ZEKE

It's about time you opened them. This
here needs to be seen.

Haley rips up the photos.

HALEY

Zeke. The hall. Now.

HALLWAY

Haley closes the door to Noah's office, then turns to Zeke.

HALEY

You've lost your mind, jeopardizing
all my hard work over some cockeyed
conspiracy theory.

ZEKE

I'm speaking truth here.

HALEY

No. You're speaking what you want
to be truth. There's a difference.

ZEKE

So, you don't deny knowing of it?

Haley hesitates to answer. Zeke pounces on her indecisiveness.

ZEKE (CONT'D)

Maybe you're in on the whole thing.

HALEY

Screw you and your cobwebs. May Ellen was right about you.

ZEKE

You brought Walt in. Who's to say you're not secretly working with him?

HALEY

Your idiocy is beyond frustrating.

ZEKE

I think you devised the whole thing -- Walt, the shooting, the deal -- to sidestep my authority.

HALEY

You're insane. Listen to yourself.

ZEKE

You knew I'd oppose you, so you went behind my back. Playing Noah and me all along like puppets.

Haley sticks a finger into Zeke's chest. Repeatedly.

HALEY

Don't ever come to my husband with these lies again, or I will deal with you like an enemy.

ZEKE

Never been anything but enemies. No use pretending different now.

HALEY

Believe me, you don't want to see that side of me. I don't lose.

Haley adjusts herself.

HALEY (CONT'D)

Now, I have important work to do. Do yourself a favor and keep your distance. I won't say it twice.

INT. THE NICHOLS' HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Loretta plays a board game with Nolan. Haley descends the stairs and slips the cross-shaped clock into her purse.

HALEY

Mommy's out the door. Bye, baby.

LORETTA

(re: the clock)

Cleaning out some clutter?

HALEY

Something like that. Thanks for babysitting. Won't be too late.

LORETTA

You're in a good mood. Whatever y'all are doing, do it more often.

HALEY

This is a one-time sorta thing, but you're right. I feel great.

LORETTA

Noah getting frisky? Spring brings out the horndog in Zeke, too.

HALEY

No, today was pay day. I finally got him to pony up.

LORETTA

And who is this?

HALEY

Same as always. Walt.

INT. DOWNTOWN BANK HEADQUARTERS - EXECUTIVE OFFICE - DAY

Haley sits across from Husky Banker.

HUSKY BANKER

I must apologize, Mrs. Nichols, for our last encounter.

HALEY

Don't. There was a script, and we stuck to it. Now, my money.

HUSKY BANKER

Yes, 10 million.

HALEY

And before I forget ...

Haley opens her purse and removes the cross-shaped clock, which has a strip of electrical tape over its lens.

HALEY (CONT'D)

... Tape stays on. No matter what.
(off his acknowledgment)
Good. And send 400k to the Reliant
guys. Now, initiate the transfer.

HUSKY BANKER

To the church account, I assume?

HALEY

No. This one is personal.

INT. MAY ELLEN'S PENTHOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

May Ellen, shower-fresh in a bathrobe, paints her nails a blood-red.

DRESSING ROOM

May Ellen checks her now-dressed appearance in a full-length mirror, then collects a nearby stack of gold envelopes, each wax-sealed with her monogram initials.

LIVING ROOM

Eleven nerve-wracked ASSISTANTS stand beside moving boxes and furniture blankets. May Ellen enters, scans the room.

MAY ELLEN

Today being a holiday, you may think
you have better places to be, and
you'd be wrong. What I'm presenting
you instead is an opportunity to
curry my favor and, as a result,
exponentially advance your careers.

She hands an addressed envelope to each of the assistants.

MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)

Deliver these by noon today. Failure
to do so, in any respect, will result
in the termination of your jobs.

May Ellen hands the final envelope out. It's addressed to:
ZEKE PERRY / C/O RELIANT STADIUM / RELIANT PKWY.

MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)

In other words, if one fails, you all fail. Your time starts now.

The assistants hurry out of the room.

EXT. RELIANT STADIUM - DAY

Overcast skies block out the sun. Giant Easter egg sculptures ring the property. Christ's Cross banners drape its exterior.

INT. RELIANT STADIUM - DAY

A packed, pastel-colored house. Stadium lights shine on the 80,000-plus CONGREGANTS and the massive endzone stage, where a CHRISTIAN ROCK BAND jams.

Behind the band, the CHRIST'S CROSS CHOIR flanks a replica hillside. A large, artificial boulder sits at its base.

BACKSTAGE

Haley leads a hand-in-hand circle prayer with Noah, Loretta, Zeke, and Nolan. Behind them, STAGEHANDS buzz about.

HALEY

And may You raise our TV ratings as high as Heaven itself, so that our global ministry may take flight and soar like gilded angels.

NOAH

Praise that.

HALEY

And may You give us, in this season of spring cleaning, the resolve to vanquish the suffocating cobwebs within our own enterprise.

Zeke mumbles in response, to which Haley smirks.

HALEY (CONT'D)

We forever preach Your majesty and work in Your name. Amen.

EVERYONE

Amen.

LORETTA

Nicely done, hon.

HALEY

Noah's not the only one in the family
who can lead a prayer.

ZEKE

Should be.

Haley shoots a cold look at Zeke, who leads Nolan off by the
hand. Loretta is close behind.

ZEKE (CONT'D)

Come on, kid, there's a couple seats
with our names on 'em.

LORETTA

Good luck, Noah. Rooting for ya.

HALEY

He doesn't need luck. He has me.

Loretta exits. Haley checks Noah's hair, straightens his tie.

HALEY (CONT'D)

We must project supreme confidence at
all times. Luck is for the weak.

NOAH

I don't think so.

HALEY

I do. Now, smile wide.
(checks Noah's teeth)
You focus on the moment. Focus on
making this your best sermon yet.

NOAH

No pressure there.

Haley snaps her fingers in front of Noah's face.

HALEY

Focus. You will deliver your best
sermon yet, no exceptions.

NOAH

No exceptions.

HALEY

And you will announce to everyone out
there that this is our time.

NOAH

Our time.

HALEY

This is the start of everything we've worked for, everything I've planned, everything we deserve.

WALT (O.S.)

And everything I'm paying for.

Walt, with Black PSD in tow, walks up to Noah and Haley.

HALEY

In the middle of something, Walt.

WALT

I heard. Knock 'em dead, Noah.

HALEY

He will.

Haley pulls a stage curtain aside to reveal a dark tunnel.

HALEY (CONT'D)

Make me proud to be your wife.

Noah takes a deep breath and enters. Haley drops the curtain.

HALEY (CONT'D)

He chooses now, of all times, to get nervous.

WALT

You ought to worry more about keeping your Easter promise.

HALEY

That's a promise I'm going to keep.

STADIUM INTERIOR

The stadium lights click off. The band plays a rhythmic beat as spotlights race across the clapping congregation.

NOAH (V.O.)

And risen from the dead on the third day was our Lord, the one and only, the utmost and holy, your friend and mine, Jesus Christ! ...

ONSTAGE

A blinding, white light erupts from behind the boulder toward the congregation. Beams shoot out in all directions.

NOAH (V.O.)
 ... And it was He who commanded the
 angels of Heaven, in the miracle to
 end all miracles, to ...

The jumbotron flashes:

EVERYONE
 Move! That! Rock!

The boulder rolls aside to reveal a male silhouette, arms
 extended, standing in front of the beaming light.

Out from the cave steps Noah, sharp-suited and pink-tied, to
 the rapturous delight of the stadium.

The spotlights follow Noah as he crisscrosses the stage and
 points to the crowd. The congregation claps. The band plays.

NOAH
 Good, glorious morning! Hello,
 Houston! Happy Easter, everyone!

Noah stops beside his signature cross-shaped podium.

NOAH (CONT'D)
 Who's ready for a jolt of Jesus?

BACKSTAGE

Haley backs Walt up. Black PSD is nowhere to be seen.

HALEY
 I want it now, while Noah's onstage.

WALT
 How naughty. I'm in.

Haley runs her hands across Walt's chest and presses him,
 with her body, against a door. He thrusts back.

HALEY
 I want to thank you. Transfer went
 through. Without a hitch.

WALT
 Forget thanks. Show me your gratitude.

HALEY
 I'll show you how done with you I am.

WALT
 Nice try. We're just getting started.

Walt grabs Haley's hair and gently yanks her toward him.

HALEY

No, done. As in finished. The end.

WALT

You'll have to talk dirtier than that to get me up.

Haley flicks Walt's lip, then softly slaps his cheek.

HALEY

I despise you, always have. The sight of you sickens me.

WALT

Better. Give me more.

HALEY

You're everything I hate, and there is nothing more I want than to make you pay for all my pain.

WALT

Getting harder by the second. So, tell me where you're aching. Here?

Walt points to Haley's pants. She shakes her head and moves his pointed finger over, and around, her chest to her heart.

HALEY

Here. For all the misery you caused by stealing my life from me.

WALT

Lick your lips and say it like you mean it.

HALEY

On the night before what's supposed to be the happiest day of my life.

Haley jerks Walt's tie toward her, then twists it tight. Walt grits his teeth with anticipation.

HALEY (CONT'D)

You took Billy from me. Now, it's my turn to make you know all my pain.

WALT

Kinky. But no brother stuff.

HALEY

How it feels to have the most important thing ripped from you.

Haley makes the money hand gesture and runs it across his face. Walt playfully snaps his teeth at her fingers.

WALT

What, money? Ha. Try again, minx.

HALEY

You wouldn't think this was funny if you knew how serious I was.

Walt assesses Haley, who's poker face is in full force.

WALT

So, what, you're stealing my money to get me back for an accident?

HALEY

Coked up and drunk, you killed my Billy. You killed my life.

WALT

That's why 10 million? I couldn't care less. Nothing but whore money.

HALEY

We never signed an agreement, I made sure of it. Now, it's like the money never existed. Nowhere to be found.

Walt grips Haley's neck hard with a single hand.

WALT

Careful. I can take you for every penny your little whore self is worth, which ain't much.

HALEY

You're the one being taken. You're never getting a piece of this.

Haley pushes the door open to reveal a brawny SECURITY TEAM. Behind them stands Black PSD in restraints.

HALEY (CONT'D)

Meet your escort out. Now, get your damn hands off me.

WALT

You're evicting me? Are you fucking insane?

HALEY

Finally, he gets it.
 (to Security Guards)
 I want these men off the premises.
 Immediately. They're not to return.

WALT

You think this will stop me? Don't
 you know who you're talking to?

HALEY

Painfully aware. Now, I'm about to
 say what Billy should have before you
 murdered him and his parents ...

WALT

My family, not yours.

HALEY

... Get the fuck out of my life.

Security Guards pull Walt and Black PSD down the hallway.

WALT

We're not done, you and me. No, not
 by a long stretch!

HALEY

It's garbage day, you arrogant prick,
 and you're nothing but trash.

STADIUM GARAGE

Security Guards muscle Walt and Black PSD to the Hummer limo.

SECURITY GUARD

Don't make us call the police.

Black PSD opens the Hummer door for Walt, who climbs in.

WALT

Fuck off, rent-a-cop.

HUMMER LIMOUSINE

Walt, unhinged, kicks the extravagant in-limo bar into a mess
 of glass shards and spilled liquor.

WALT

You, double-crossing, cocksucking,
 Christian cunt!

LATER

Blood seeps through Walt's pant leg. Disheveled, he stares blankly ahead.

WALT

She's not thinking straight. She has feelings for me. She wants to come home. She's a Greene, after all. She can't get out, so she pushes me away. A cry for help. To rescue her.

The partition lowers to reveal the PSDs, who look to Walt.

WALT (CONT'D)

From her sad life, her sad husband. I can help her, and I will. Noah needs to go. Then, she comes home to me. A fall. A slip. No, a crash.

WHITE PSD

It must be an accident, sir.

WALT

It's happened before. Hard turn, slam of the brakes, seatbelt fails.

(to White PSD)

Stop the vehicle.

WHITE PSD

Sir, we're in traffic.

WALT

And get out.

The Hummer slows to a stop. Cars swerve by and honk.

WHITE PSD

Sir?

WALT

Go find Pastor Noah. Invite him over. Say it's a surprise for Haley, only he can know. Don't let her see you.

WHITE PSD

When and where, sir?

WALT

Today. Soon as he can. Make it between our two buildings.

WHITE PSD

Yes, sir.

WALT

And then prepare the ambulance. Call the Doc, too. I may be needing medical attention later.

INT. RELIANT STADIUM - LUXURY SUITE - DAY

Post-service, Noah pops a Champagne cork, then fills glasses for Haley and the three Investors, who raise their flutes.

BEAKISH INVESTOR

To taking the world by storm!

HALEY

To our new partnership and our bright, bright future together!

NOAH

And to my Haley, the greatest wife a man could ever hope for!

LUXURY LEVEL HALLWAY

Zeke watches Noah and Haley toast with the Investors.

SUITE-LEVEL RESTROOM

Noah enters a toilet stall, drops his pants to his ankles, and sits. A beat later, White PSD enters an adjacent stall.

WHITE PSD

You put on one hell of a show, sir.

NOAH

Uh, I'm not into whatever you're into.

WHITE PSD

My employer, Walt Greene, asked me to relay an invitation to you. He has a surprise planned for your wife.

NOAH

You work for Walt? Why didn't you say so? I was fearing you were one of those rest stop fellas.

WHITE PSD

Not even close, sir.

PARKING GARAGE

Haley supervises Loretta as she helps Nolan into a car seat.

Not far from them, Zeke pulls Noah aside, who holds a little black dress in dry cleaning plastic.

ZEKE

Got any idea where Walt disappeared to? I haven't seen him since we were all backstage.

NOAH

He's back at the church. I'm going over to meet him now.

ZEKE

Everything good? Noticed he wasn't at your champagne toast, either.

NOAH

Better than good. He's got a surprise planned for Haley, and I'm in on it.

EXT. TALL-CART CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Zeke's pickup pulls up to the building and parks.

INT. TALL-CART CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - BOARDROOM - DAY

May Ellen adjusts a cloth-covered item on the massive glass tabletop, while Zeke arrives at the door with an assistant and holds up his golde envelope. Its seal is broken.

ZEKE

You've got a nasty habit, Ms. Price, working on a holiday.

MAY ELLEN

This coming from a man who runs a church. I could say the same.

May Ellen motions to the table. They sit.

MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)

There's been a development with the potential to harm our partnership.

ZEKE

What kind of harm are you talking?

Zeke lifts the cloth to peek underneath. May Ellen stops him.

MAY ELLEN

Enough to embroil your church and mine in a tabloid shitstorm until we're both out of business.

ZEKE

Sounds like some weather. What do you need from me?

MAY ELLEN

Commit to moving forward together, and I'll keep us both dry.

Two assistants arrive at the door with Elder and Lean Board Member, who both hold golde envelopes.

MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)

My next meeting, I apologize. So, can we count on each other?

ZEKE

By all means, partner.

EXT. TALL-CART AT CHRIST'S CROSS - PLAZA - DAY

Grand opening banners hang above the store entrance. Its doors and windows, covered with black, peek-proof plastic.

MAY ELLEN (V.O.)

Reckless endangerment. Bribery of a public official. False imprisonment ...

Walt, at the entrance, waits beside his family's silver Rolls-Royce. Its accident damage, unfixed from years ago.

MAY ELLEN (V.O.)

... Vehicular manslaughter. Resisting arrest. Indecent exposure ...

INT. TALL-CART CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - BOARDROOM - DAY

May Ellen stands before 10 BOARD MEMBERS (Smug, Elder, Lean, etc.), who sit at the table with their golde envelopes. In the corner, a SECRETARY records the minutes.

MAY ELLEN

... Aggravated battery. Impersonation of a police officer. DWI. Arson. Rape.

SMUG BOARD MEMBER

I know I'm not missing the back nine for a laundry list. What's going on?

MAY ELLEN

In addition to everything just shared, I've come into possession of evidence that implicates our Chairman in the shooting at Christ's Cross.

May Ellen removes the cloth to reveal a crystal, cross-shaped clock. She pulls off a piece of black tape from its front.

MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)

By a show of hands, who, here, has seen Walt's wound from the shooting?

The Board Members look to one another, but no hand raises.

MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)

Not one of us? Does anyone else find that rather difficult to believe?

ELDER BOARD MEMBER

We all saw the footage, May Ellen. Walt's lucky to have pulled through.

MAY ELLEN

Not only was Walt unharmed that day, I am also certain he orchestrated the entire event in order to manipulate Christ's Cross into a partnership under false pretenses.

SMUG BOARD MEMBER

That's one bold statement. You mentioned proof?

MAY ELLEN

I did, and it's only fair that it be revealed in the presence of the full board, Chairman included.

LEAN BOARD MEMBER

How soon can we get him here?

MAY ELLEN

If my timing's right, and it always is, we'll be seeing him shortly.

EXT. TALL-CART AT CHRIST'S CROSS - PLAZA - DAY

The Hummer speeds across the empty parking lot.

It skids to a stop, yards away from the Rolls-Royce and Walt, the only soul in sight. Black PSD jumps out, tablet in hand.

WALT

I said to meet me at the crash site.

BLACK PSD

Sir, there's been a development.

Walt takes the tablet, examines its webcam-like feed (labeled "NICHOLS' MASTER BEDROOM") of May Ellen and the board.

WALT

This is a problem.

INT. TALL-CART CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - BOARDROOM - DAY

Walt appears on a wall-mounted flatscreen opposite May Ellen.

WALT

Someone tell me why the fuck my Sunday's being interrupted.

MAY ELLEN

Walt, thank you for joining us.

INT. HUMMER LIMOUSINE - DAY

Walt speaks into the tablet. Black PSD stands guard outside.

BACK-AND-FORTH.

ELDER BOARD MEMBER

This may sound odd, Walt, but we need you to lift up your shirt.

WALT

Only if you show me yours first.

LEAN BOARD MEMBER

This is serious. We need to see your wound from the shooting.

WALT

Next, you'll ask for blood and urine.

MAY ELLEN

In a manner of speaking.
(activates an intercom)
Send him in.

WALT

What the hell's going on?

In walks a solemn Dr. Burke with a leather medical bag.

WALT (CONT'D)

You spineless traitor.

MAY ELLEN

This is Dr. Robert Burke, personal physician to our Chairman and Houston General's attending physician on the day in question. Doctor, if you will.

WALT

Not one word, Doc. I'm warning you.

DR. BURKE

I have been employed by Mr. Greene for 11 years now, and last December --

WALT

Stop there and you'll have more money than you know what to do with.

MAY ELLEN

Sorry, Walt, but Dr. Burke cares more about his medical license than your dirty work. You were saying, Doctor?

Dr. Burke looks to Walt with apologetic eyes.

DR. BURKE

Last December, I falsified hospital records, at Mr. Greene's request, after the shooting at Christ's Cross.

Walt watches the Board Members whisper among themselves.

WALT

Bullshit, every fucking word.

Dr. Burke pulls out blood bags, both full and empty.

DR. BURKE

I also withdrew multiple pints --

WALT

Without my cooperation, the only thing to prove here is this crock's malpractice and my mistake in hiring him. Nice fucking try, May Ellen.

MAY ELLEN

I'm afraid our Chairman's correct. If we don't see his abdomen, we can never know for sure if he was, in fact, shot that day.

WALT

Pay attention, everyone. This is the closest May Ellen's ever come to admitting a mistake.

MAY ELLEN

(re: cross-shaped clock)
Which is why I brought this.

INT. ZEKE'S RANCH HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Loretta watches Zeke's truck pull up the gravel drive as she cuts a bologna sandwich for Nolan, who sits at the table and swings his feet. Zeke soon shuffles in, perplexed.

ZEKE

Something's going down.

LORETTA

You read my mind.

Loretta extends a trash bag to Zeke, who waves it off.

ZEKE

No, talking Tall-Cart.

LORETTA

This again?

Zeke takes a seat at the table, across from Nolan, and grabs the crystal cross-shaped clock. He looks it over.

ZEKE

Was just at Tall-Cart H.Q., where May Ellen's having a board meeting.

LORETTA

On Easter? What on Earth for?

ZEKE

That's what I don't know. Yet.

INT. TALL-CART CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - BOARDROOM - DAY

May Ellen holds the clock up for the room to see.

MAY ELLEN

Walt, explain to the room how exactly you're attending this meeting.

WALT

You're wasting my time, May Ellen.

MAY ELLEN

Is it not true that this clock was a gift from you to the Nichols family?

WALT

Never seen it before in my life.

May Ellen reads the clock's inscription.

MAY ELLEN

Praise Walt and Amaze Walt. Hmm. What an odd coincidence, given you've never even seen this clock before.

(off Walt's silence)

I ask again, did you gift this to the Nichols family last Christmas?

Walt hesitates to answer as the room looks him down.

LEAN BOARD MEMBER

Dammit, Walt, speak up.

MAY ELLEN

Our Chairman's sudden reserve is understandable, as he knows well that Haley Nichols came to me, clock in hand, and accused him of spying on her and her family for months.

WALT

Pure speculative bullshit.

MAY ELLEN

This clock, one of dozens of gifts they received from him, includes a camera. The lens is at its center.

The clock is passed around the table. Each Board Member response proves less favorable than the last.

MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)

Our Chairman's mere presence in this meeting today, via a camera used to spy on the Nichols family, confirms her accusation against him.

WALT

Like hell, it does.

MAY ELLEN

For the entirety of our partnership with Christ's Cross, he has watched them, he has filmed them, from every corner of every room in their home.

WALT

You can't prove a damn thing.

MAY ELLEN

That includes their six-year-old son's bedroom, where he sleeps, plays, gets dressed. Six years old.

ELDER BOARD MEMBER

A damn disgrace. You've brought shame on your daddy's name once again.

MAY ELLEN

And God forbid the media learns of our Chairman's crowning achievement to his disastrous tenure.

WALT

I'm being framed. Simple as that.

MAY ELLEN

You are indeed being framed, Walt, by your own stupidity.

INT. ZEKE'S RANCH HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Zeke steals a quarter of Nolan's sandwich and eyes the clock.

ZEKE

I'm saying there was a clock, like this, but with tape on front.

LORETTA

Electrical tape?

ZEKE

Exactly right. Good guessing.

LORETTA

It wasn't a guess. I think I saw that very clock a few days ago at Haley's. Even asked about it. She was off to the bank, said Walt finally paid up.

ZEKE

There hasn't been any recent transfer to the church account.

LORETTA

Well, it didn't sound like business to me.

INT. TALL-CART CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - BOARDROOM - DAY

The room's attention ping-pongs between May Ellen and Walt.

WALT

Why the hell am I the only one on trial here? May Ellen fed me mounds of bullshit about how we were about to lose our jobs, so I manned up and reeled in Christ's fucking Cross.

MAY ELLEN

Forgive me for providing you with incentive to finally do your job.

WALT

No, that's not what this is. Tell them about you coming to my place.

MAY ELLEN

You haven't thought that through.

WALT

Tell the others about that visit, and we'll see what's what.

MAY ELLEN

If you insist, Mr. Chairman.

May Ellen drops a folder onto the table.

MAY ELLEN (CONT'D)

My reason for encouraging Walt to step up and do his job.

Lean Board Member looks inside, finds a dozen medical exam photos of beaten and bruised Jaded and Nymphet Teen.

LEAN BOARD MEMBER

Jesus. Should I even ask?

MAY ELLEN

Fifteen and sixteen years old, the ages of the two girls severely beaten and raped by our Chairman.

SMUG BOARD MEMBER

You, imbecile.

MAY ELLEN

In crisis mode, I went to Walt and pleaded that he change his ways. My advice obviously fell on deaf ears.

WALT

Fuck you, deaf. Since when did you change your loyalties?

MAY ELLEN

Never. Unlike yours, mine have always been to this company.

(looks around the room)

Fellow members of the board, we must end this threat today before he ends us tomorrow. I move to vote.

WALT

Wait a goddamn minute.

ELDER BOARD MEMBER

I second the motion.

MAY ELLEN

All in favor of removing Walt Greene from the Chairmanship, effective immediately?

Walt slams his hand down on the seat next to him.

WALT

Don't you fucking dare!

The Board Members collectively raise their hands.

BOARD MEMBERS

Yea.

WALT

You, ungrateful slut. You're just jealous I'm not fucking you anymore. You were never good enough for me.

The Board Members look to another in amazement. And shock.

MAY ELLEN

All in favor of removing Walt Greene from the Board of Directors?

BOARD MEMBERS

Yea.

WALT

Bitch, all I've done for you. Without me, you're nothing. I made you!

MAY ELLEN

All in favor of disassociating --

WALT

Had you not threatened to sue after I dumped your ass, you'd still be toiling away in medi-fucking-ocrity.

MAY ELLEN

All in favor of disassociating --

WALT

I'm a goddamn Greene!

Walt kicks across the limo at what remains of the bar.

MAY ELLEN

All in favor of disassociating Walt Greene entirely from Tall-Cart, Inc., and its subsidiaries?

BOARD MEMBERS

Yea.

WALT

Every one of you, done. That's a fucking fact. I'll hunt you all down!

MAY ELLEN

You have 21 days to relinquish all company possessions, including Greene Manor, the Chairmanship residence.

WALT

I don't give a shit what you say. That house belongs to me. My family!

MAY ELLEN

Failure to do so will result in forced removal and legal action.

WALT

Spiteful group of motherfucking --

May Ellen mutes the flatscreen, which shows Walt screaming.

MAY ELLEN

In the emergency vacation of the Chairmanship, the board must choose a replacement. I nominate myself.

ELDER BOARD MEMBER

I second that.

Walt, red-faced, punches the tablet screen repeatedly. His knuckle skin breaks open, and he bleeds onto the glass.

MAY ELLEN
All in favor?

BOARD MEMBERS
Yea.

MAY ELLEN
Fellow members of the board, that
concludes business for today.

May Ellen smirks at Walt as he shatters his tablet lens. She mouths "Fuck You" at him, then flips off the flatscreen.

INT. ZEKE'S RANCH HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Zeke searches the pantry, then opens a bag of pork rinds.

ZEKE
I'm assuming her clock, like ours,
came from Walt.

LORETTA
Minus the tape, we have the same one.

ZEKE
And it somehow winds up in Tall-
Cart's emergency board meeting.

LORETTA
Who would May Ellen be after?

ZEKE
Only one of interest to us, given she
asked me over and all, would be Walt.

EXT. TALL-CART AT CHRIST'S CROSS - PLAZA - DAY

Walt shoots out of the Hummer, a bottle of Jack wrapped in his bloodied hand, and collides with Black PSD.

WALT
Open the fucking store. Now!

INT. TALL-CART - DAY

Walt storms past rows of extra tall shopping carts as the store lights power on. He swigs from the bottle, then fires it at a cash register.

WALT
That bitch!

Black PSD watches from the entrance doors as Walt kicks and punches at endcap displays, which reach sky-high.

GLASSWARE AISLE

Walt snatches a greene platter and hurls it to the floor. He then lays waste to every bowl, dish, glass within reach.

SPORTING GOODS

Walt batters shelves with a metal, Little League bat, then stops at the sight ahead: a glowing wall of fish tanks.

PET SECTION

Walt taps the bat against the glass of a goldefish tank, one of two dozen that make up the florescent wall.

WALT
Jesus fucking fish.

Walt destroys the tank with a mighty swing. He takes a deep breath as gallons of water, dozens of fish, and pounds of neon pebbles smack against the floor at his feet.

STOREFRONT

Black PSD withdraws his handgun and heads into the heart of the store, toward the shattering glass.

PET SECTION

Walt smashes the remaining tanks, each destruction more spectacular and explosive than the last.

Invigorated, Walt catches his breath as hundreds of guppies flap at his feet. He notices the hunting section not far off.

WALT
Firepower.

Walt flattens a few fish as he walks off.

INT. ZEKE'S RANCH HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Zeke sets the crystal clock on the carpeted floor, then stomps it into a pile of has-been with his boot heel.

LORETTA

Have you lost your mind? I liked that right where it was, thank you.

Zeke surveys the wreckage: glass shards, a mangled clock face, and an out-of-place piece of debris, which he examines.

ZEKE

Seems Walt's a dang peeping tom.

Zeke hands the ball-bearing camera to Loretta.

LORETTA

He's got something loose in the head if he wants to watch us fart around.

Loretta sets the camera on the countertop, then smashes it with the bottom of a mayonnaise jar.

ZEKE

Don't know if that spells a change in personnel, but it sure suggests it.

INT. CHRIST'S CROSS - NOAH'S OFFICE - DAY

Noah and Haley enter. She unrolls a world map on his desk and circles cities. Noah sits, then stands back up.

NOAH

My head's still spinning.

HALEY

Get used to it. We'll be spinning around the world in no time.

NOAH

I need some air. Taking a quick walk.

Haley kicks off her high heels and eyes Noah suspiciously. Her little black dress hangs from a chair.

HALEY

I hope it's diamonds. The surprise you're keeping from me.

NOAH

I'm a horrible liar, I know. You caught me. Just stay here, okay?

HALEY

Don't leave me waiting long.

INT. TALL-CART - DAY

Walt shatters a gun case with a swing, then pulls out a double-barreled shotgun, shooting pouch, cases of shotshells.

Black PSD appears unseen at aisle-end as Walt empties the cases into the shooting pouch, drops a shell in each barrel, and snaps the breech shut with conviction.

SODA POP ISLAND

Walt fires on a pyramid of plastic, jumbo-sized bottles of neon-colored soda, which explode and spray upon impact.

FLATSCREEN TELEVISION WALL

Walt stares down the screens, which together display Walt, Haley, and Noah in a commercial, then unloads a storm of gunshots until the wall sparks and sizzles with bullet holes.

ENDCAP DISPLAY

Walt reloads as he passes life-sized, cardboard cutouts of he and Noah, which triggers a motion sensor.

WALT CARDBOARD CUTOUT (V.O.)
Remember, folks, Greene is golde ...

NEXT AISLE

Black PSD holsters his gun and pulls out a cell phone.

WALT

snaps the breech shut.

NOAH CARDBOARD CUTOUT (V.O.)
... And golde is the color of Greene!

He fires and shreds Noah's cardboard cutout face, then fires again and blows the cardboard head completely off.

Walt soaks up the satisfying moment. Until the sound of a body collapsing interrupts from an aisle over.

INT. CHRIST'S CROSS - NOAH'S OFFICE - DAY

Haley, now in her black dress, calls.

She looks out of the window, across the plaza below, as a cell phone rings on the nearby desk. It's Noah's.

HALEY

Of course, you leave your phone.

Haley sees Noah, across the plaza, pass the Hummer limo and enter Tall-Cart's open entry doors.

HALEY (CONT'D)

Where you going, mystery man?

She then sees the Rolls-Royce. Its frame, dented. Its front window, spiderweb-cracked. Its passenger window, gone.

The phone drops from her hand.

HALEY (CONT'D)

No. No. No.

INT. TALL-CART - DAY

Walt blankly observes at the edge of an expanding pool of blood. The source, a gruesome neck wound on Black PSD, who struggles to stop the gushing.

NOAH (O.S.)

Walt, you in here? It's Noah.

Walt cocks his head toward the entrance.

INT. ZEKE'S RANCH HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Zeke twirls his key ring like a cowboy would a six-shooter.

ZEKE

I bet Haley found the camera in her own clock, confronted May Ellen with it, and forced that meeting today.

LORETTA

Walt disappeared during the service.

ZEKE

After, too, with that toast. Strange as the man paid for the whole thing.

LORETTA

Maybe that was her plan all along. Get his money, cut him loose.

ZEKE

I wouldn't put it past her.

INT. CHRIST'S CROSS MEGACHURCH - STAIRWELL - DAY

Haley races down, shoeless, three stairs at a time.

EXT. PLAZA - DAY

Haley runs by the Hummer and the Rolls.

INT. TALL-CART - DAY

Haley rushes past a group of mobility scooters and a cage of propane tanks to find Noah face-down in Black PSD's blood.

HALEY

God, no.

Haley rolls Noah onto his back and shakes him.

HALEY (CONT'D)

Wake up, baby, wake up.

WALT

hits a touchscreen device, which directs the entrance doors to slam shut and mechanically lock with synchronized clicks.

HALEY

turns to look as Walt races toward her and boots her head like a soccer ball. Her skull thuds against the bloody floor.

WALT

Bitch.

INT. ZEKE'S RANCH HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Loretta and Nolan watch as Zeke paces between the fridge and the dining table and rolls a toothpick in his mouth.

ZEKE

The almighty revenge. A dead fiance's more than enough motive.

LORETTA

But we're talking Haley. You honestly think she could be behind it all?

ZEKE

Texas intuition, darlin'. Hasn't failed me yet.

INT. TALL-CART - DAY

Walt douses an aisle (shelves, floor) with lighter fluid.

Not far off sits a wheelbarrow. In it are fireplace matches, numerous cannisters of lighter fluid, and the shotgun.

HALEY

wakes from unconsciousness to find her hands bound and her feet tied to Black PSD's and Noah's bodies.

And Black PSD's phone, half-submerged in the blood pool. She reaches back, over her head, and grabs it. She tries to dial, but the phone is now a blood-soaked sponge.

HALEY

Shit.

In disgust, she flings it back at Black PSD, but instead of a fleshy thud, it clanks against the metal of his handgun.

HALEY (CONT'D)

Thank you, Jesus.

WALT

pours a gas-trail out of one aisle and down another, toward Haley. He looks up to find the gun aimed shakily at him.

WALT

You even know how to use that?

HALEY

pulls the trigger. Again and again.

WALT

ducks as bullets whizz by. He turns for cover, but a shot pierces his arm and spins him around.

He keels over as a bullet punches his stomach, and another kicks his leg out from under him.

HALEY

empties the clip as Walt crashes to the floor.

INT. ZEKE'S RANCH HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Zeke checks his revolver's swing-out cylinder: six rounds.

ZEKE

If our thinking's right, Walt's
losing his temper about now.

LORETTA

And what's you getting a gun got to
do with it?

ZEKE

(looks to Nolan)
Cover them ears, boy. And tight.
(to Loretta)
Noah's stopping by the church to meet
up with Walt, who's got some surprise
planned for Haley.

LORETTA

And when exactly were you planning
to tell me this, Ezekiel?

ZEKE

Call 'em when I'm on the road, tell
'em to keep their distance.

LORETTA

You be careful, dammit.

Zeke kisses Loretta on the forehead.

ZEKE

Don't know no other way.

INT. TALL-CART - DAY

Walt writhes in pain. He stabs at a shelf and knocks down
white Pastor Noah T-shirts, which he ties around his wounds.

WALT

Goddamn you, Haley!

He crawls across the gas-slick floor to a mobility scooter and pulls himself into its seat.

WALT (CONT'D)
Son. Of. A. Fuck.

HALEY

bites at her blood-soaked restraints with a wary eye on Walt, then drops to the floor and tries to pull herself and her leg weights (Black PSD, Noah) toward the store entrance.

WHEELBARROW

Walt jerks the scooter to a stop and transfers, with his good arm, its contents to the steering column basket.

WALT
Bitch deserves everything she gets.

HALEY

scoots forward frantically. First, herself. Then, her legs.

HALEY
Faster, dammit, faster.

WALT

tosses the lighter fluid cannisters into the basket. On second thought, he looks to Haley and pulls one back out.

EXT. EXPRESSWAY / ZEKE'S PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

Zeke swerves between lanes and roars past other drivers.

INT. TALL-CART - DAY

Walt wheels up to Haley and squirts a stream of lighter fluid into her face, then onto Noah's, who wakes in a choking fit.

HALEY
Noah, thank God!

Haley reaches for Noah, but Walt presses the shotgun barrel against her forehead and forces her back.

WALT
None of that.

HALEY
Fuck you.

Walt pushes the shotgun barrel hard into Haley's forehead as Noah coughs up a mixture of blood and lighter fluid.

WALT
Says the reason we're in this mess
right now.

HALEY
You're wrong. It was all May Ellen's
idea. I only did what she told me to.

Walt rests the shotgun on his shoulder.

WALT
Noah, you'd blush at the things your
wife's done to me.

HALEY
May Ellen promised to save the church
if I got close to you. I had to.

Walt grabs the matchbox and pulls one out. Haley's eyes widen as he flicks it alight.

WALT
Licked my caviar spoon, for starters.

HALEY
She came to me months before we saw
each other at the bank. It was all
staged. She told me you'd be coming.

Walt blows out the match to Haley's relief, then picks out another and lights it.

WALT
Slipped her warm panties in a Bible
she defiled, too.

Walt pulls her thong from his pocket and flings it at Noah, who tries to respond, but chokes again and grips his neck.

WALT (CONT'D)
And then there are those peep shows
she did for me.

HALEY
That's a lie, Noah. Don't listen.

Walt lights another match.

WALT

Had cameras in your house since Christmas, Noah, and wifey's known about 'em almost from the start.

HALEY

I absolutely did not.

WALT

And guess what she did when she found them, Noah? Looked right at one of my cameras and fucked you silly. With the lights on, too.

Noah looks to Haley in disbelief.

HALEY

I'm not arguing the past.

Walt blows out his match and uses the shotgun barrel to shift Noah's attention away from Haley, back to him.

WALT

Better we focus on the present, Noah, like today, the day your wife promised to give me the fuck of my life. And fuck me, she did.

INT. CHRIST'S CROSS - NOAH'S OFFICE - DAY

Zeke hurries in, gun drawn, to two phones ringing. He finds Noah's on the desk, then Haley's on the floor. Both Caller IDs read "LORETTA."

Zeke looks out of the window, in frustration, and sees the Hummer and Rolls.

ZEKE

Son-bitch.

INT. TALL-CART - DAY

Walt dumps another cannister of lighter fluid onto the floor, around Haley, Noah, and Black PSD.

WALT

Lost my job, my home. Birthrights, Noah, both of them. All because of your cunt of a wife won't let go of the past.

HALEY

You ripped my future away from me.

WALT

It was an accident, Noah, an accident, but she still blames me.

HALEY

That's because you're to blame! You, worthless, coked up drunk.

WALT

Doesn't she realize I suffer for that night every fucking day?

HALEY

So do I!

WALT

But Billy was my brother, my blood.

HALEY

And he didn't even respect you. 'The Liability,' that's what he called you. To me, to friends, to your fam --

WALT

Your wife and her lies.

HALEY

All the time, he did. He was right, too, and it cost him his life.

Walt hammers Noah in the head with the butt of the shotgun. Noah thumps against the ground, out cold again.

HALEY (CONT'D)

You, monster!

WALT

You love my brother or the money?

HALEY

You know I loved them both.

WALT

Which first? Answer wise.

HALEY

The money. But I did love Billy.

WALT

Tell me how that gives you the right to tear my life down.

HALEY
It was May Ellen.

Walt presses the shotgun barrel into Haley's cheek.

WALT
You said that already.

HALEY
Pull the trigger, then. Do it!

Walt pulls the shotgun back, exchanges it for lighter fluid.

WALT
You don't get off that easy.

He unscrews the top and dumps the entire thing over Haley, who bucks and fights her restraints, to no avail.

WALT (CONT'D)
Say your prayers, Mrs. Nichols.
You're about to burn for your sins.

Walt strikes a match alight and flicks it to his side, onto a stream of lighter fluid, which erupts in flames.

HALEY
Don't!

But the flames race away from them and down a parallel aisle.

Walt pulls out the touchscreen device as he wheels off. Haley drops back onto the floor and pulls herself forward.

HALEY (CONT'D)
Come on, Haley Rey.

ENTRANCE DOORS

unlock with clicks. Walt wheels up to them as they begin to open. He notices something outside.

WALT
Zeke.

ZEKE'S PICKUP TRUCK

roars across the plaza and plows into Tall-Cart's entrance.

The glass doors shatter, and the pickup punches Walt off of the scooter and 50 feet back into the store.

Walt slams into a display of Pastor Noah garden gnomes and drops to the floor like a rag doll.

ZEKE

jumps out of his truck, gun drawn. In the distance, the fire engulfs the back of the store.

ZEKE

Dear Lord.

HALEY

Zeke! Over here!

He hurries to Haley's side and stops at the sight of Noah.

ZEKE

I'm too late, ain't I?

HALEY

Thank God you found me.

Zeke pulls a pocket knife from his belt-holster and cuts both Haley and Noah free.

ZEKE

Grab his legs, blondie. Time's running out.

WALT

groans as he comes to in a pile of gnome shards.

Behind him, the fire screams closer; before him, Zeke and Haley carry Noah toward the entrance light; and beside him, the shotgun lies within reach.

ZEKE'S PICKUP TRUCK

Haley crawls in on the driver's side, while Zeke hoists Noah up, opposite her.

ZEKE

Take his arms. I got the rest.

WALT

wraps a weakened finger around the trigger and aims ahead.

ZEKE'S PICKUP TRUCK

Haley pulls and Zeke pushes until Noah's in safe. Zeke then shuts the door and climbs onto the truck's side step.

ZEKE

Let's get out of here.

HALEY

No telling me twice.

Haley throws the truck into reverse as a shotgun blast rings out and peppers Zeke's chest. He falls from the truck.

Zeke tries to stand, but he's powerless. He waves Haley over as he spits up blood.

HALEY

looks to Zeke, then to Walt, and lastly to Noah, next to her.

HALEY

Sorry, Zeke.

She slams the gas pedal.

ZEKE

reaches for the truck as it speeds backwards.

ZEKE

Haley, wait!

The truck crashes into the entrance doorframe, fractured and bent, which catches its underside and stops it in its tracks.

HALEY

floors the gas pedal, but the tires only spin and smoke.

HALEY

Shit, shit, shit!

WALT

cracks a smile at Haley as he pulls out a single shotshell from his shirt pocket.

ZEKE

surveys the landscape: Haley is on one side; Walt, on the other; and the cage of propane tanks, dead ahead.

He pulls his gun from its holster and shoots at the tanks, but his weak aim sends the shot errant.

WALT

eyes Zeke as he shoots at the tanks and misses again.

WALT

You been left for dead, old-timer!

HALEY

shakes the steering wheel and kicks the gas pedal.

HALEY

Go! For Christ-sake, go!

PICKUP TRUCK

jerks back as the doorframe buckles, but it's still caught.

ZEKE

coughs up blood as he watches Walt snap his breech shut and look to Haley. The flames are all but on top of Walt now.

HALEY

slaps the steering wheel. Tears roll down her bloody cheeks.

HALEY

I'll be better, I swear. Just let
Noah live! Jesus, please!

WALT

lines up his shot at Haley, behind the wheel.

WALT

You're not leaving me again.

PICKUP TRUCK

screeches backward, as the frame snaps in two, and shoots out of the store, onto the plaza.

ZEKE

aims at the propane tanks and fires. Bullseye.

PLAZA

The pickup speeds away as Tall-Cart fills with a succession of fiery, infernal explosions.

WALT

evaporates as a fireball wall consumes him.

PLAZA

The blast-force races out and lifts the front of the truck up, 90 degrees, and slams it into Christ's Cross.

PICKUP TRUCK

The impact ricochets Haley and Noah around the cab like human pinballs until it crashes back to the ground.

TALL-CART

burns. Awesome. Spectacular. Terrifying. Right.

EXT. CHRIST'S CROSS MEGACHURCH - DAY

SUPER: TWO WEEKS LATER

Overcast sky hangs over thousands of black-clad mourners as they file through the arena entrances.

INT. CHRIST'S CROSS MEGACHURCH - DAY

A full house of somber-faced church folk take their seats. At congregation-front sits a veiled Loretta with Nolan at her side. May Ellen and Police Chief bookend them.

Onstage, flower arrangements cluster around photos of Zeke. Black cloth hangs from the podium cross.

ZEKE'S OFFICE

A heavily bandaged Haley stands, on crutches, in front of the wall of windows as a TEAM OF MOVERS clears the room of all traces of Zeke, including his gnarled wood furniture.

Haley looks out, from behind a plastic face guard, across the plaza, at the charred, caved in wreckage of Tall-Cart.

ONSTAGE

The building erupts with thunderous applause and deafening cheers as Noah, wheelchair-bound with a full-leg cast and medical halo, wheels past the floral displays to the podium.

On Noah's lap, a Bible and one of Zeke's ten-gallon hats.

FRONT ROW

Police Chief helps Loretta to her feet. She blows a kiss to Noah, who reciprocates the gesture. He then waves to Nolan and May Ellen, who stand in ovation.

ZEKE'S OFFICE

Haley scowls as the floor shakes with the church cheers. Behind her, two movers carry a desk out and empty the room.

Until a uniformed Mr. Sharp enters and locks the door.

HALEY

stares across the plaza as Mr. Sharp creeps up and snaps her neck. She slips out of her crutches and crashes to the floor.

NOAH (V.O.)

My daddy told me when I was just a
tyke, there are good men, there are
better men, and then there's Zeke ...

ONSTAGE

Noah looks out across the crowd as his eyes well up.

NOAH

... To a dear friend and a true
gentleman of Jesus. To Zeke!

Noah raises Zeke's hat for all to see. The ovation swells.

EXT. GREENE MANOR - DAY

Moving trucks drive through the extensive grounds and park
before the Gothic mansion on the pebbled drive.

INT. GREENE MANOR - GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

A stately fire and stacks of moving boxes. A ladder rests
against the portrait wall, which numbers one less tonight.

May Ellen pours a drink, kicks up her feet, and raises her
glass toward the fireplace, in which Walt's portrait burns.

MAY ELLEN

Checkmate.

GRAND DOORWAY

White PSD stands in the shadows and looks in on May Ellen at
the fireplace. In his hand, but still holstered, is a gun.

FADE TO BLACK.